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Strengthening emergency relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction, recovery and prevention in the aftermath of the Indian Ocean tsunami disaster

Report of the Secretary-General***

Summary

Three and a half years after the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, progress is apparent across the affected region: displaced persons are residing in newly constructed homes, children are in school and hospitals are being rebuilt and repaired. Yet, while physical reconstruction efforts have been actualized, many complex challenges remain as the region continues to recover. Each affected country faces different challenges and thus the picture of progress is an uneven one; however, common to all countries is the realization that it will take many years for individual households and the wider economies on which they depend to recover from one of recorded history's most destructive natural disasters.

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I. Introduction

1. On 26 December 2004, an earthquake off the western coast of northern Sumatra, measuring 9.0 on the Richter scale, triggered an intensely destructive tsunami which affected 12 countries and took 186,983 lives. Hundreds of thousands of persons were displaced and over 3 million persons were affected, half of whom lost their sources of livelihood. The tsunami had the greatest impact on rural coastal communities, many of which were already poor and vulnerable and had few livelihood options. The hardest-hit and most severely affected countries were India, Indonesia, Maldives, Sri Lanka and Thailand. Malaysia, Myanmar, Seychelles, Somalia and the United Republic of Tanzania were also affected.

2. The present report, prepared as a follow-up to General Assembly resolution 62/91, provides an overview of progress, achievements and challenges confronting India, Indonesia, Maldives, Sri Lanka and Thailand, and focuses primarily on recovery efforts in key social sectors. It also addresses aid and recovery coordination, models of Government humanitarian and recovery institutions, transparency and accountability to donors, as well as risk reduction, tsunami early warning and incorporation of prevention in development planning. It does not purport to cover the field, in terms of progress achieved, which has been substantial in all five countries, or of the challenges that recovery actors will continue to face as efforts become mainstreamed.

II. Impact of the tsunami and progress of recovery efforts

3. During the course of recovery efforts, considerable strides were taken towards rehabilitation and reconstruction. Across the five most affected countries, progress was evident throughout 2006 and 2007. Many countries have fulfilled their promise to rebuild better, evidenced by the number of safer houses constructed, improved education and health facilities, and important steps forward in disaster risk management and disaster risk reduction.

4. Much of this progress has been achieved in the face of serious obstacles, such as logistic hurdles, administrative constraints, lagging capacity, coordination challenges, rising inflation and the resurgence of the conflict in Sri Lanka. Future recovery and reconstruction efforts across the entire tsunami-affected region will confront these and other challenges, ranging from operational to policy issues.

5. Continuing challenges for leading agencies have been, inter alia, the linkage of various ongoing recovery processes, provision or access to critical information and capacity-building of local governments. For example, many tsunami information systems provided unanalysed data on inputs that were not linked with ongoing needs assessments. Moreover, many implementing agencies' planning systems were and continue to be based on original assessments and commitments, despite the fact that needs have changed considerably in many sectors.

India

6. The tsunami affected more than 1,400 miles of India's southern coastline. Across some 1,089 villages, 12,405 people died and close to 2 million people were

affected, with nearly 650,000 displaced. The state of Tamil Nadu bore the brunt of the disaster, followed by the territory of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Total post-tsunami needs were assessed at US$ 2.1 billion. Across all areas, approximately one third of the affected population allegedly belong to underprivileged and marginalized social groups, such as Dalits or tribal men and women.

7. In India the tsunami destroyed or damaged an estimated 100,000 houses. The state governments of Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, as well as the union territories of Puducherry and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, proposed to rebuild about 76,000 houses during initial reconstruction. In response to this proposal, approximately 72,000 houses have been or are being built at the present time. The government of Tamil Nadu has initiated the construction of 55,000 additional houses, funded through the central Government or the World Bank, which will fall within 1 kilometre from the coastline or 200 metres from backwaters. In Kerala about 10,860 additional houses are anticipated for construction.

8. Education in the post-tsunami phase is critical to the protection and development of each child. More than 260,000 children were affected by the tsunami. Interventions ensured that classes resumed as quickly as possible, that quality education packages were introduced and that child-friendly environments were created through furniture and supply distribution. By January 2008, a total of 138,588 children and 3,472 teachers in the state of Tamil Nadu benefited from these interventions. Extracurricular activities and participatory learning have been especially promoted to harness the potential of children to actively manage social change, and teachers have been trained to implement activity-based learning, the methodology of which has been successfully extended beyond tsunami-affected schools to all 47,000 primary and middle schools in the state.

9. Health infrastructure was also significantly affected. In addition to reconstructing facilities and providing medical supplies, several other initiatives were undertaken to improve the quality of health care and post-disaster health issues. To reduce infant mortality rates, 1,180 village-level health workers, 870 state-level medical officers and 200 faculty members of paediatrics departments in 14 Government medical colleges were trained in the use of protocols regarding integrated management of neonatal and childhood illness. A total of 800 health staff were trained on behaviour change communication, village health nurses in 13 affected districts were trained in newborn care and 6 fully equipped mobile health units were provided for emergency response to sick newborns and pregnant mothers. All 19,600 workers from Integrated Child Development Services centres were trained in infant and young child feeding practices, and the newly formed mother support groups covered a population of 20 million in the affected districts. Finally, media communication educated the public on various health issues.

10. The tsunami's traumatic impact on its victims necessitated the delivery of psychosocial services to assist in the normalization of people's lives. To do this, a community-based approach was developed and implemented by training local people as community-level workers to provide support to 225,000 people through counselling, social assistance and patient referrals for further specialized health care. Child rights awareness programmes, school-based counselling and community-based activities at childcare centres have also helped more than 115,000 children recover from distress and protect them from potential abuse and exploitation. A

social awareness programme in Kerala educates over 700,000 children about the values of democracy and gender equality.

11. In tsunami-affected states, the prevalence of HIV/AIDS is among the highest in India. In this context, the United Nations, in partnership with key stakeholders, has implemented projects to address the needs of those affected — in particular those at risk of being trafficked, trafficking survivors and HIV-positive individuals. Two thousand village vigilance committees have been educated about trafficking and HIV/AIDS, 500 peer educators have been identified and trained and more than 30,000 women and children in the tsunami-affected areas have been familiarized with HIV/AIDS issues. A multimedia campaign addressing the protection of people's rights reached thousands across Tamil Nadu, 3 legal aid clinics have been established to provide justice to HIV-positive individuals and more than 2,000 police have been sensitized to HIV issues, including stigma and discrimination surrounding high-risk groups and people living with the disease.

12. Livelihood recovery efforts have focused on re-establishing prior economic activities and developing alternative livelihoods through vocational training and small enterprise support. Wage-employment and self-employment opportunities are being created for youth, women and disadvantaged people, with skills-training of 3,500 beneficiaries for placement in income-generating activity. Two thousand beneficiaries are undergoing entrepreneurship training through the well-recognized International Labour Organization methodology, "start and improve your business". Entrepreneurship beneficiaries will also gain from support/linkages with banks and other organizations to ensure stable business establishment.

13. Important advances are being made to affect fisheries policy at the state levels. Models of community-based fishery management are piloted in 55 villages in Tamil Nadu and Kerala with the involvement of locally elected representatives. Lessons from these initiatives will contribute to the development of a stakeholder-based fisheries management policy framework in Tamil Nadu and Puducherry. Many crucial studies are under way — for trawler-fishing fleet reduction in Palk Bay, financial services support for fishermen and diversification of fisheries livelihoods. Similarly, crucial pilot projects are under way to encourage microfish business support, stakeholder-based harbour management and backwater aquaculture for fisherwomen.

14. Disaster risk management is an integral part of reconstruction and rehabilitation in the tsunami-affected states of India. Efforts are being made to link systematic and sustainable disaster risk management efforts at district, state and national levels. These have included vulnerability mapping, coastal management planning, construction of cyclone shelters, disaster-proof housing and disaster risk reduction capacity-strengthening of governments and communities. By January 2008, 3,200 members of community early warning teams received training in comprehension and response to early warning messages. Promotional materials and training manuals have been published to disseminate preparedness methodologies among major stakeholders.

15. Policy support and coordination is imperative in the disaster risk reduction framework. In Tamil Nadu the creation of a state-level coordination and resource centre, together with a network of district-level centres was necessary for the enhancement of partnerships between government and civil society organizations in aid coordination. With the conclusion of tsunami recovery operations, these centres

have been institutionalized and repositioned in the development context to facilitate preparedness and disaster risk reduction. A Web-based beneficiary tracking system has also been developed for the government of Tamil Nadu as a tool for aid and information management, resulting in strengthened local governance, accountability and transparency, coordination, and efficient and smooth disaster risk management operation.

16. The tsunami had unprecedented consequences for the region's fragile coastal ecosystems. A two-phase approach was adopted to assess rapid coastal development issues, increased resource needs and changing legislation, while determining interventions to ensure long-term security and sustainability of these unique coastal environments. Baseline studies were conducted and long-term monitoring protocols for continued conservation were implemented. Programmes piloting coastal eco-restoration strategies will benefit local communities in terms of livelihood security and coastal protection from natural disasters. Furthermore, in February 2008 the Ministry of Finance of India declared its intention to establish a permanent institution to address climate change issues and strengthen disaster risk reduction linkages.

17. The United Nations, in partnership with the government, has aimed to create a safe environment for affected populations through hygiene promotion programmes and construction of 650 eco-sanitation toilets in Tamil Nadu. In 192 intermediate shelters a waste management system was created to educate children about the importance of maintaining healthy environments. In the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, 331 rainwater harvesting systems were constructed to improve access to safe water in dwelling units, schools, *anganwadis* and health centres.

Indonesia

18. Over three years have passed since the earthquake and tsunami in Aceh — and a subsequent earthquake on Nias Island in March 2005 — which caused immense physical destruction, killing more than 130,000 people and affecting the livelihoods of at least 500,000. Financing needs to cover the long-term recovery of Aceh and Nias overall are now calculated at $8 billion (including $1.2 billion for inflation and $1.9 billion for building back better), of which $7 billion has already been committed to specific projects. Future expenditures will be constrained, however, where absorptive capacity for these funds remains insufficient. Strategic planning and coordination must be strengthened to ensure the necessary physical, social, economic and legal infrastructure to absorb greater recovery and rehabilitation spending to meet evolving needs.

19. With 162,341 new permanent houses and repairs to an additional 85,000 required, the housing sector has presented the greatest challenge to Indonesia. By the end of 2007, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) had constructed 19,923 transitional shelters, accommodating more than 80,000 people. As of February 2008, 2,056 households remain in transitional shelters, reduced from an original total of some 16,688 households. Challenges remain to improve community infrastructure and to complete all construction by the end of October 2008.

20. Work in the social services has focused on physical reconstruction and quality improvement. The disaster severely impacted the education sector, killing 2,500

teachers and destroying or damaging approximately 2,636 schools. To date, 798 permanent schools have been rebuilt or rehabilitated, supplemented by 379 temporary facilities. A total of 21,977 teachers have been trained in Aceh and Nias. The lack of coordination and planning has slowed efforts in the education sector, as evidenced by agency competition for building sites and reports of overconstruction in some areas.

21. In the health sector, which saw 122 buildings damaged or destroyed, 386 health facilities — including 3 hospitals, 55 satellite health posts and 68 health centres — have been rebuilt or rehabilitated in Aceh, with an additional 19 in Nias. Figures on reconstruction exceed the number of health facilities affected by the disaster because many health centres damaged during the war in Aceh were also slated for rehabilitation. In addition to reconstruction, there is a continuing need to provide medical supplies and skilled personnel to staff these new facilities, and the Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Agency for Aceh and Nias is providing access to training and education in order to develop capacity and provision of health services.

22. Many activities have focused on the assessment of the post-tsunami environmental situation in Aceh and North Sumatra. In a sign of progress towards disaster risk reduction, over 36 km of coastal protection (such as sea walls) and 21 km of saltwater dykes have thus far been constructed. Two mangrove reforestation projects in the Banda Aceh area have been funded and implemented by the United Nations, Wetlands International and other local organizations. Local communities are supportive of the projects and have noticed increased biodiversity (shrimps, crabs and wading birds), which, consequently, is strengthening the basis of their livelihoods. Concerns exist, however, regarding building quality and the reconstruction of some communities too close to the coast. Nonetheless, increased community awareness and the planned design and mapping of escape routes and safe refuge areas will contribute to safer and more sustainable communities.

23. The tsunami had a massive impact on livelihoods. In addition to damage to the productive sector totalling $1.2 billion, 100,000 small business owners lost their sources of livelihood, 13,828 boats were damaged, 27,593 hectares of fish ponds were destroyed, 60,000 farmers were displaced and close to 150,136 hectares of agricultural land were damaged. Livelihoods restoration is visible, with over two thirds of the male labour force back to work in both rural and urban areas. In addition, 3,142 boats have been distributed, 12,935 hectares of fishponds rehabilitated and more than 63,923 hectares of agricultural land rehabilitated.

24. The 2008 Tsunami Recovery Indicator Package and World Bank poverty assessment both show that poverty has returned to pre-tsunami levels in Aceh. This is likely the case owing to the tremendous impact of international and domestic support, but also suggests that poverty levels may have been initially overestimated in the wake of the disaster. In any case, poverty remains a central challenge for Aceh and Nias given the damage done to rural farming and fisheries, and the key livelihoods of the poor.

25. The peace process in Aceh stands as perhaps the most important example of building back better. Following the signing of the peace agreement in 2005 and democratic elections in 2006, no major upsets to the peace process have occurred — a momentous achievement following three decades of conflict. Efforts have intensified in 2008 to ensure a conflict-sensitive approach to longer-term recovery with the near finalization of a multi-year government plan for reintegration and

peacebuilding, with support from the United States of America, the European Union, the United Nations, the World Bank, the International Organization for Migration and other partners.

26. Disaster risk reduction poses other important challenges. The government's disaster response entity in Aceh lost significant capacity and presently operates without a formalized standard operating procedure. Guidance and support to disaster risk reduction efforts at governance and programmatic levels continue to be provided in concert with the requirements of the Hyogo Framework for Action, 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters.[1] The passage into law of the Disaster Management Bill in April 2007 was a highly significant step towards Indonesia's implementation of the necessary structures and systems for the incorporation of disaster risk reduction into the development process, requiring strengthened local capacity and involvement.

27. The Government's insistence on broad participatory mechanisms in aid delivery has led to programmes reflecting the importance of community-driven approaches. Results from an impact assessment show a connection between early adoption of such approaches with the improved quality and sustainability of the recovery process and subsequent community satisfaction. The Government diverted, from its own budget, substantial funding to scale up community-driven reconstruction and recovery, and has recently requested that the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) publish a review of the lessons learned on housing reconstruction, to be completed in June 2008.

28. The Office of the United Nations Recovery Coordinator for Aceh and Nias expanded its key activities to meet the increasingly complex recovery needs focusing on (a) support to the Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Agency for Aceh and Nias, provincial, and local governments in strengthening capacity of disaster risk management activities through coordination and planning mechanisms at various administrative levels, specifically in terms of regionalization of recovery and reconstruction, and (b) coordination support to the United Nations system and recovery community in Aceh and Nias, in particular through the Area Security Management Team, the United Nations team, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and the common service user groups.

29. As the Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Agency for Aceh and Nias continues to plan its handover to local government and exit from Aceh and Nias in 2009, all reconstruction partners are considering transitions in their respective programmes. Accelerated efforts must be made to ensure the necessary laws and regulations are in place to facilitate asset handovers, including inventories of assets to be transferred. Capacity-building efforts must be broadly integrated within asset management strategies to ensure continued functionality and maintenance of assets following transfer. Opportunities for stakeholder involvement, including non-governmental organizations, the media and the academic and private sectors through the Aceh Convergence Group, guided by the United Nations Technical Working Group, should be encouraged and pursued. Substantial efforts are being made to promote public education on disaster preparedness and mitigation, including tsunami early warning and evacuation in 300 villages. Stakeholders in promoting people-centred

[1] A/CONF.206/6 and Corr.1, chap. I, resolution 2.

early warning systems must continue to link communities to formal warning systems within a multi-hazard framework.

Maldives

30. The tsunami flooded all but 9 of the nation's 199 inhabited islands; 2 islands disappeared and 53 islands suffered severe damage. A total of 15,000 people were displaced and one third of the population, approximately 100,000 people, were severely affected by loss of homes, livelihoods and infrastructure. Estimated recovery needs of $393.3 million were met by commitments, although shortfalls exist in some sectors. A total of $141 million was spent by the end of 2006. The pillars of economic activity — tourism, fishing and agriculture — were enormously affected. The fisheries sector received aid for the 82 per cent of damaged vessels and equipment and as cash grants. In the agriculture sector, essential relief assistance of $1.4 million aided 6,000 families and women from 26 islands received livelihood equipment and cash grants towards replacement of tools for home-based income-generating activities. The 2006 Tsunami Impact Assessment Survey improved general knowledge of the impact of the tsunami on women, allowing gender inequalities to be identified and addressed.

31. The drastic effect of the tsunami on the economy, including an initial 62 per cent reduction of gross domestic product (GDP), is now being mitigated by increased revenue from tourism and reconstruction. Following the Government's intensive efforts, the tourism industry has fully recovered and tourist arrivals in 2006 were very close to pre-tsunami levels. The rebound in tourism and fisheries contributed to an extraordinary GDP growth of 18 per cent in 2006, which has since levelled to an average of 8 per cent in 2007. By December 2007, reconstruction and repairs to an expanded number of houses — 3,000 or half of all the houses affected — were undertaken primarily through first-ever community-led processes. The Government recently developed its first national housing policy to address the long-standing issue of housing for vulnerable and low-income groups.

32. In the health sector, work focused on reconstruction, replacement of physical infrastructure and equipment, and strengthening the capacity to respond to future disasters. Four hospitals are being constructed; 6 of the 12 planned health centres have been completed and 4 are under way. A total of 30 health posts will be rehabilitated or reconstructed, of which 24 are complete. With stunting and wasting of children under five years of age a major concern, health centres are being properly equipped in support of a nutrition and child health surveillance system to identify malnourished children for targeted interventions and a project to promote integrated early childhood development is under way in five focus atolls. Twenty-five health-care providers have been trained in voluntary counselling and testing to prevent and control mother-child HIV/AIDS transmission. A comprehensive child protection service was established, including the provision of information for referral services, ensuring children's legal protection through the Juvenile Justice Act, services for protection, recovery and reintegration of victims of violence and abuse and drug demand reduction and risk reduction of HIV/AIDS and other diseases.

33. By the end of 2006, 20 of the planned 87 permanent schools and 5 of 20 planned preschools had been upgraded or rebuilt. Since then, the quality education

programme has expanded to include all nationally registered preschools and, in partnership with the Ministry of Education, has supported the establishment of 20 atoll-based Teacher Resource Centres. These centres are aimed at continuing the implementation of methods to ensure child-friendly learning; moreover, teaching continues to gain momentum.

34. In the fishing industry, recovery targets have been met. Efforts are now concentrated on long-term development, including elaboration of appropriate industry regulations and guidelines, capital investment, technical support for diversification and training for commercial fisherfolk. Agriculture extension methodologies have been introduced on 14 islands. Five community-based fish markets have been constructed and community management of waste has been facilitated on 16 islands.

35. The National Disaster Management Centre, which became a permanent institution in December 2006, has developed a national plan on disaster management. Community-based disaster preparedness plans have been developed in 3 atolls covering 19 islands, with the goal of building capacities of island communities to cope with and manage the impact of disasters and to enhance resilience; replication is planned for 2 more atolls in 2008. The Government's safe islands programme aims to relocate some island populations to seven "safer" islands or to create "safe zones" for isolated communities on distant islands; programme policies focus on building a post-tsunami strategic environmental framework.

36. In supporting infrastructure restoration, six island harbours were repaired and/or reconstructed in 2005 and 2006 and the Government soon will complete reconstruction of another harbour. Upon completion in August 2008, this $6.9 million project will have benefited over 11,000 people. In the monitoring and consultation processes with island communities where harbours were repaired, participatory methods were also used. Mangroves and other coastal ecosystems on Huraa Island were rehabilitated in partnership with the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Wetlands International.

37. Rainwater harvesting kits were provided to households and communities and reverse osmosis desalination plants were mobilized to provide safe water supplies for emergency reserves. Reflecting principles of building back better, model sanitation systems were developed on four pilot islands to ensure sustainability and preserve the environment.

38. The main achievements of the aid coordination project were: establishment of the development assistance database to track and monitor external resources, including its usage as a recovery tool to provide data on all development assistance; an analysis of the aid coordination structures; establishment of a Maldives Partnership Forum that brought international and national communities together to discuss development issues; and periodic reviews of financial needs for the national recovery and reconstruction plan.

39. Although the recovery process is on track, several key challenges remain. One is to increase the pace of housing and harbour reconstruction, in particular of 50 high-priority harbours. Implementation of the safe islands programme has made modest progress as the Government and communities face complexities of relocating and consolidating communities on different atolls. The May 2007 sea swells that caused severe coastal flooding on 88 of 197 inhabited islands indicates

increasing vulnerability of small island populations and thus underscores the importance of disaster risk reduction and environmental management.

40. Finally, political reform has been a key goal in terms of building back better in Maldives. In early 2005, the Government launched a comprehensive process of governance reform which continues to face serious challenges today. Overcoming these challenges will require a commitment to political compromise and political dialogue on the part of all sides in a process that will require close monitoring and engagement for many years.

Sri Lanka

41. The tsunami devastated over two thirds of Sri Lanka's coast and caused more than 35,000 fatalities. The financial needs of Sri Lanka were estimated at $2.15 billion. A total of $3.17 billion has been committed for reconstruction, of which donors have disbursed $1.81 billion to implementing partners and $1.39 billion were spent by the end of the first quarter of 2008.

42. The majority of those in need of new homes (except in the north-east) are receiving cash grants to rebuild, with the remainder of homes being rebuilt by donors, IFRC, non-governmental organizations, or others. In all, 114,069 houses need rebuilding/repair; 79,184 units are being rebuilt, representing approximately 59 per cent of the total. In terms of donor-driven programmes, there is a continuing need to identify appropriate land on which to build new houses; efforts to meet the need for accurate and complete beneficiary lists continue to cause delays and, in some instances, have led to housing distribution inequities. A total of 135 communities serving as "community development councils" were officially registered as legal entities by the Government.

43. Some 150,000 people lost their source of livelihood, most of whom had been in the fisheries sector, while others were in the service and agricultural sectors; about 80 per cent lost their main source of income and 90 per cent lost productive assets. Livelihood programmes have utilized cash grants, cash-for-work, asset replacement and access to capital through microfinance; in the north and east especially there is continued demand for cash grants and cash-for-work programmes. In the fisheries sector there is continued concern regarding the oversupply of small day boats, which is causing labour shortages and harbour capacity problems, as well as the need for multiday boats, which typically catch about one third of the total fish supply. Repair/replacement of these vessels has been underfunded thus far. The tourism sector has also been greatly affected by the upsurge in conflict, which has led to a significant decrease in tourists, thus impacting small-scale operators.

44. Primary emphasis in the education sector has been reconstruction of damaged facilities. The Government was able to secure funding to repair just over one half of the schools used to house internally displaced persons. Sadly, most school reconstruction projects in Jaffna, Kilinochchi, Mullaitivu and Vavuniya, and multiple projects in the east were abandoned owing to conflict-related access restrictions. The same reality exists for health infrastructure.

45. Continuing challenges for the health sector include the need to begin large-scale construction projects, build capacity of health-care workers and communities,

and improve local-level coordination. In terms of education, programme monitoring has significantly slowed in conflict areas and funding gaps remain. While progress has been made in repairing infrastructure, challenges persist and include difficulties in procurement and logistics, increasing costs of construction materials, insufficient skilled contractors and lack of coordination. In addition, restrictions imposed on the movement of civilian, United Nations and non-governmental organization vehicles in parts of the north led to a shortage of drugs in local hospitals and clinics.

46. The most significant challenge to the recovery process in Sri Lanka is ongoing civil conflict. Escalating violence over the past few years has set back reconstruction efforts in the north and east of the country, though it continues largely apace in the south. The conflict has also impacted livelihoods of around 2.5 million people, hampering the economic recovery of tsunami-affected areas. Security concerns have posed operational hurdles across a range of sectors, making it difficult or impossible for international aid partners to move or deliver assistance and supplies. Restrictions on transportation of certain construction materials, such as cement and steel, as well as difficulties in accessing certain areas have hampered recovery.

47. United Nations organizations are assisting with disaster risk reduction mainstreaming into local-level development planning through a country risk profile to identify vulnerable areas. National capacities are enhanced through the Disaster Management Centre, the establishment of an Emergency Operations Centre and the creation of early warning systems in selected areas. In terms of assistance to policy development, United Nations organizations have played a pivotal role in supporting the deliberations of the Parliamentary Select Committee on Natural Disasters and the subsequent development and adoption of the Disaster Management Act.

48. Expert support has been provided for the conduct of strategic environmental assessments and built considerable momentum towards the adoption of mandatory strategic environmental assessments provisions. Pilot assessments were conducted in Trincomalee Bay, Panadura and Hambantota District, with contributions from the Government and local universities. In addition, a mangrove reforestation programme, implemented by the Forestry Department in conjunction with a community-based organization, established a mangrove nursery in Ampara District. Three lagoon sites, totalling 55 hectares, were also identified for the planting of seedlings.

49. A large proportion of livelihoods, housing and environmental projects have been conducted through community-based organizations. To increase institutional capacities for future development, the "Strong Places" project helped over 700 community-based organizations to actively strengthen participation. These projects, among others, intend to develop community skills and organizational structures, and will hopefully enhance their roles in the development process of their environments — a legacy intended to continue well beyond the tsunami recovery process.

Thailand

50. Hundreds of thousands of people were affected by the tsunami in Thailand. Over 8,200 people were killed, 400 fishing villages along the Andaman coast were seriously hit and tens of thousands of people in the fisheries and tourism sectors lost

their means of livelihood. The tsunami also seriously affected the environment, with marine and coastal national parks severely damaged, coral reefs destroyed and agricultural land affected by saltwater intrusion.

51. A total of 4,806 houses were destroyed or damaged. Owners of 4,110 of such houses requested support from the Government, which planned to rebuild 3,558 houses and provide cash support for repairs of 552 others. Land issues — mostly relating to community losses of ancestral, yet informally owned, land — caused many delays. Major land disputes submitted by tsunami-affected communities have been resolved by the Government Subcommittee on Resolving Tsunami-related Land Rights Issues.

52. Significant progress has been made in other areas as well. The Government's intensive weighing programme has contributed to the nearly 6 per cent reduction in malnutrition rates among children in the six tsunami-affected provinces. Twenty-four schools were destroyed or damaged; of these, all but one have been replaced or repaired, with the remaining school under construction. Efforts in the education sector have also aimed to improve the quality of facilities for marginalized groups. Through a new initiative, safe drinking water and toilets are being brought to schools in the poorest ethnic minority and migrant communities of Krabi, Satun and Trang provinces. Forty of the 48 destroyed or damaged health facilities have been repaired or rebuilt.

53. The competition on the development of the best community work plan for effective and durable disaster preparedness and response project was initiated in May 2007 by the National Disaster Warning Centre and the United Nations to promote local design and implementation of work plans for disaster preparedness and response. The project which ended in December 2007, was piloted in 24 villages/schools throughout 6 Andaman coastal provinces and encouraged creative community participation in finding effective, practical and durable disaster preparedness and response solutions. It resulted in (a) the establishment of sea-level gauge stations for the national early warning system and (b) enhancement of institutional disaster risk management capacities and community preparedness.

54. Many of the challenges that Thailand will encounter throughout its recovery are long-term systemic ones for which the Government has implemented new strategies and policies. The Royal Thai Government, in recognition of the country's inadequate disaster management following the tsunami, enacted the new Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Act in November 2007. The law has significantly altered Thailand's disaster management system; the National Disaster Management Committee has also been restructured to increase efficiency and improve inter-ministerial coordination.

55. The continued engagement of local government in the ongoing recovery effort is critical, as local government institutions are better equipped to orchestrate the type of community participation required to ensure that outcomes are truly anchored in the needs of affected households. Case studies and toolkits based on pilot testing, which are to be used for local government planning, are produced under the project entitled, "Support for rehabilitation of traditional communities and municipalities in tsunami-affected areas in Thailand", and include lessons learned and local testimonies of the rehabilitation process. The documents are distributed nationwide to local governments and other relevant stakeholders.

56. In June 2006, the Coca-Cola Company, in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Foundation, started the project entitled, "Working with communities to meet water and sanitation needs sustainably", with 4 villages/communities selected for water resource development implementation on Lanta Island for the Thailand component. Since the project's completion at the end of 2007, the governor and local authorities have committed themselves to continue livelihood and recovery efforts in the area. UNDP also assisted in the mobilization of funds from the Global Environment Facility and the South-South programme for a coastal forest management project and a community-managed boat repair shop. In addition to the relief and development efforts, the project also facilitated the resolution of land dispute problems through human rights intervention.

Malaysia, Myanmar, Seychelles, Somalia and the United Republic of Tanzania

57. The tsunami was extraordinary in both the intensity of its devastation and its wide geographical reach, with waves impacting land and people 4,000 miles from the earthquake's epicentre. Apart from the five worst-affected countries, Malaysia, Myanmar, Seychelles, Somalia and the United Republic of Tanzania also experienced varying degrees of destruction.

58. The tsunami was the worst disaster in Malaysia's history, claiming 69 lives and destroying or damaging the houses of 8,000 people, many of whom lived in poor fishing communities. In Myanmar, the official death toll was 61, with 200 villages and 10,000 to 12,000 people directly or indirectly affected along the southern coast. The tsunami damaged housing and infrastructure in Seychelles, where 2 people were killed and 950 families were displaced. In Somalia, the tsunami struck just as the drought was coming to an end and livelihoods were beginning to recover from flash floods, freezing rain and environmental degradation. A total of 289 people were killed and 44,000 people required emergency humanitarian assistance. In the United Republic of Tanzania, the tsunami claimed 12 lives.

59. In Somalia, construction of schools has resulted in the highest enrolments in the past 15 years. In Malaysia, best practices from HIV/AIDS interventions in tsunami-affected areas, such as harm reduction and prevention of mother-to-child transmission, have contributed to the National Strategic Plan on HIV/AIDS. In Myanmar, more than 60,000 families received insecticide-treated bed nets to prevent malaria.

III. Status of implementation of recommendations contained in the 2007 report of the Secretary-General (A/62/83-E/2007/67)

A. Coordination in the humanitarian and recovery phases

Dedicated field-based recovery management structures

60. The established network of field offices in 8 districts (12 at the height of the tsunami recovery process) in Sri Lanka proved invaluable in the immediate

aftermath of the tsunami and during the reconstruction thereafter. The familiarity of field office staff with the on-the-ground situation helped immensely to quickly obtain needs assessments and develop needs-based project proposals for the recovery effort.

61. In Indonesia, at the request of the Governor of Aceh and the director of the Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Agency for Aceh and Nias, a nearly finalized integrated planning, coordination and monitoring framework for recovery, the Aceh Recovery Framework, was developed. This framework, led by provincial government chairs and supported by the Agency and international partners, ensures interlinkages between vital areas of Aceh's transition: ongoing peace processes and reintegration efforts, rule of law, good governance and democratic decentralization, economic development, infrastructure and housing reconstruction and basic social services — as well as cross-cutting issues, such as environment and gender. This framework will map the way for capacity-building and asset management to support a carefully considered handover from the Agency to the local government in 2009.

62. At the district level, a United Nations/Agency-supported coordination mechanism for recovery was piloted by the Governor of Aceh Timur. Its success has spurred 21 additional mechanisms across Aceh and Nias which are critical to regionalizing and sustaining coordination and planning at the district level; they are administered by a revamped joint secretariat comprising local government, the Agency and the United Nations. The forum offers a structured mechanism to ensure a participatory approach in developing, coordinating, executing and monitoring district recovery and development plans with the involvement of representatives from, inter alia, civil society, international agencies, local government, the Kecamatan Development Programme, and the Agency's regional office. The forum's key deliverables are a comprehensive recovery strategy in each district, as well as a recovery planning profile of the best available district data.

63. To enhance coordination and better manage challenges and opportunities across thematic and geographical areas, a virtual knowledge management network of international and local recovery/governance professionals and decision makers is being implemented in 2008. This network, an international United Nations best practice known as "solutions exchange", will develop six virtual "communities of practice" supported by a coordination and research secretariat to ensure high-quality, timely and targeted solutions in all phases of recovery and governance planning, programming and implementation. Importantly, the network will capture and continue to benefit from the expertise of the Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Agency for Aceh and Nias and other partners that will remain in the network after 2009.

64. To facilitate the recovery process, in particular regarding shelter and infrastructure, community-driven approaches were implemented to ensure that skills and investments remain in communities and strengthen donorship and solidarity. Training communities and local government officials to enable this process was also essential.

B. Different models of Government humanitarian and recovery institutions

1. Continued reform of recovery institutions

65. Under the provisions of the aforementioned Disaster Management Bill, Indonesia established a National Disaster Management Agency to provide comprehensive disaster risk reduction leadership, including emergency response through routine sectoral programmes and specially earmarked funds in national, provincial and district budgets. The law is based on the premise that protection from disaster hazards is among the basic rights of the population and confirms the role of Government as the duty-bearer in ensuring such protection. The provisions also highlight the need for integration of disaster risk reduction into national development programming and the allocation of sufficient funds for that purpose. Furthermore, when a state of disaster is declared, the Agency will exercise special authority in leading and coordinating the response, including undertaking early recovery leading to rehabilitation and reconstruction, as also provided for in the new law. The head of the new Agency will have Cabinet rank.

66. As a part of its comprehensive assistance to national disaster risk reduction and disaster risk management efforts, Sri Lanka continues to provide technical support and capacity development to the Disaster Management Centre, the newly established lead agency for all disaster risk reduction efforts in the country. Furthermore, the capacity development for recovery programme offers an integrated package of support to public sector institutions involved in tsunami recovery, assisting them to develop/sustain the capacities of these institutions for effective service delivery beyond the recovery effort. In Indonesia, the Governor of Aceh convened a Flood Preparedness Working Group to support his administration's preparation of contingency and response plans to annual floods, known to wreak disaster in communities and disrupt livelihoods, school and mobility for days and even weeks. Efforts to develop a flood preparedness database of international capacity should further improve flood response and mobilization times.

2. Assessing damages and needs

67. Partners of the Tsunami Recovery Impact Assessment and Monitoring System (TRIAMS) have made some key recommendations that should be taken into consideration by those proposing reform in needs assessment processes:

- Coordination between various line ministries and data collection agencies is vital, as some data, although readily available, are not routinely shared; United Nations and other stakeholders must support coordination between and within these ministries and agencies
- For information to be useful, data disaggregation should be carried out at the smallest possible denominator (subdistrict or village level) depending on the type of data being collected; data collection should include non-affected populations in order to monitor potential inequities created or exacerbated by disaster response. Such an approach would provide decision makers with a more coherent empirical base so as to deter responders from "doing harm" through application of overly stringent targeting policies and practices

- It is important that both absolute numbers and percentages be included in the data collection process so that the extent of the destruction, the scope of the losses and the resilience of the community may be captured
- The fact that good decision-making and programming is based on good information requires that data be analysed/transformed into a useful product for decision makers. To date, the myriad systems established during tsunami response have been inconsistent in providing decision makers with good information.

C. Transparency and accountability to donors, including financial tracking and reporting, monitoring and evaluation, and measuring progress

68. In his reports for 2006 (A/61/87-E/2006/77) and 2007 (A/62/83-E/2007/67) the Secretary-General noted the development of several tools to increase transparency and accountability of the myriad actors involved in the tsunami response. Important progress was made in the development and implementation of several of those tools, notably the development assistance database, TRIAMS and the Tsunami Evaluation Coalition.

1. Development assistance database

69. The Secretary-General's recommendation that all local and international organizations provide comprehensive information to the development assistance database systems (A/61/87-E/2006/77, para. 69) has been addressed and continued. The four national databases established to track recovery and reconstruction have been updated regularly and provide data on projects and assistance. Members of the public, Governments, donors and all interested parties have open access to the databases; pre-prepared reports posted on country websites for Sri Lanka and Thailand provide additional new standards of decision-making, accountability and transparency. The databases have been shared with and drawn upon by the International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions in its review of tsunami assistance.

70. A major thrust of the Organization's technical support for the databases has been capacity-strengthening of Government agencies to manage databases, to maintain/update systems locally and to ensure long-term sustainability of the tool. A second component has entailed system adaptation, enabling response to broader and longer-term accountability and transparency — beyond tsunami-related goals. Thus, in Sri Lanka, the database has been adapted to account for non-governmental sector contributions (including civil society organizations/non-governmental organizations and the private sector) to recovery and long-term development initiatives. In Maldives the system has evolved towards tracking the overall national budget, including domestic resources used in preparing the public sector investment programme. In Indonesia, the development assistance database has been integrated into the database of the Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Agency for Aceh and Nias as a monitoring and planning tool.

71. All local and international organizations should continue to support efforts of responsible Government authorities to assume full responsibility for the

management and sustainability of the development assistance databases, including continued adaptation for accountability and transparency-related uses in areas extending beyond the tsunami and increased integration with local government structures and civil society actors. This may ensure continuity in monitoring financial commitments and disbursements as well as expand the scope of the database to include aspects such as output tracking indicators at the higher and disaggregated level to monitor non-official development assistance funded projects.

2. Tsunami Recovery Impact Assessment and Monitoring System

72. TRIAMS is a common analytical framework designed to assist Governments, aid agencies and affected populations in assessing and monitoring the rate and direction of tsunami recovery. It has four main components, namely: (a) outcome and impact indicators collected largely through existing Government surveys; (b) core and country-specific monitoring indicators collected largely through routine information systems; (c) various methods devised to measure perspectives of affected populations; and (d) additional methods allowing for helpful triangulation in analysing and interpreting quantitative findings. It is significant that the TRIAMS framework addresses gaps in analytical approaches of the United Nations and other actors involved in recovery. Analysis conducted in Sri Lanka, Indonesia and Maldives has demonstrated how existing data can be mapped against current needs assessments and disaggregated to the subdistrict, island or village level so as to reveal significant progress, occasional over-commitments and other gaps in recovery work.

73. In Indonesia, the Information and Analysis Section in the Office of the United Nations Recovery Coordinator, working with the Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Agency for Aceh and Nias and the provincial government, prepared the second Tsunami Recovery Indicator Package report for presentation by the Agency at the TRIAMS workshop in Bangkok (2007) and again at a workshop in Banda Aceh. To meet the evolving needs for analysis and programming, the second Package features 80 additional indicators on prevalent social, cultural, demographic and economic conditions in Aceh and Nias.

74. The Government of Maldives, through the Ministry of Planning and National Development, has led the implementation of TRIAMS with ongoing support from UNDP, the World Health Organization (WHO) and IFRC. In order to continue progress and sustainably build Government capacity, the Ministry has developed three extensive proposals for which it has sought support.

75. The Government of Sri Lanka requested United Nations leadership in the qualitative assessment segment of the TRIAMS initiative at a workshop in Bangkok (May 2006). Beneficiary perception surveys were conducted in five affected districts and, alongside the University of Colombo, UNDP built upon the highly successful Peoples Consultations on Tsunami Recovery project to conduct focus group discussions with beneficiary communities across six affected districts as part of the TRIAMS effort. The two components should provide a comprehensive set of qualitative data on beneficiary perspectives regarding recovery. In addition, the United Nations Children's Fund and WHO have supported key staff of the United Nations Resident Coordinator to conduct district and subdistrict analyses in the health, education and livelihood sectors, further demonstrating the potential power of the TRIAMS framework as a coordination tool.

76. In overall terms, significant progress has been made in further developing and piloting the TRIAMS framework. Participating countries updated and added disaster risk reduction indicators to the framework in April 2007, reflecting important changes to the recovery situation in most countries. At least two countries are attempting to link the TRIAMS framework with the United Nations Development Assistance Framework to allow smoother transition of monitoring and evaluation systems supported by various stakeholders and, more importantly, to encourage the framework process to empower local decision makers by supporting disaggregation of data and analysis to the lowest level possible. A few countries are working with United Nations agencies and others to apply this approach to the Millennium Development Goals.

77. The Tsunami Evaluation Coalition produced five thematic evaluations and two synthesis reports in 2006. Four main findings and over 200 sub-recommendations were noted in the initial synthesis report. Coalition members continue to disseminate findings to various actors and, more importantly, to benchmark utilization of the recommendations. This work is expected to continue throughout 2008, with milestone events planned at United Nations agencies; international, bilateral organizations, non-governmental organizations and others will discuss their approaches in adopting the Coalition's recommendations, many of which have been noted throughout the present report.

3. Making information on accountability available to civil society

78. Transparency and accountability have been seen as central to the tsunami recovery programmes and several initiatives were implemented to address these issues. The "Strong Places" project in Sri Lanka piloted an Aid/Watch initiative to empower communities to monitor the progress of projects.

79. UN-Habitat ensured a full evaluation of its community-organized housing schemes. For instance, in Indonesia community audits were triangulated with detailed statements of the partnering microfinance bank, while a local university provided an in-depth post-construction evaluation, which involved many community focus groups.

D. Risk reduction, tsunami early warning and incorporation of prevention in development planning

80. Since the tsunami, many measures to evaluate/strengthen early warning systems have focused principally on establishing, inter alia, system governance structures, technical advice and implementation, public awareness and preparedness, and training.

81. Several targeted training activities involving more than 150 national officials and researchers have taken place in tsunami-affected countries and continue to deliver culturally appropriate public awareness and educational materials throughout the region. A series of milestones have measured progress in establishing official tsunami warning focal points, enhancing detection networks and communications, and defining comprehensive national plans for each country participating in the process.

82. Today, the Indian Ocean tsunami early warning system includes seismological and oceanic observation networks, regional analysis and advisory centres, and national tsunami warning centres linked to national risk assessment and preparedness activities. Twenty-five of 28 possible nations have established official tsunami warning focal points capable of receiving and disseminating tsunami advisories around the clock. The Intergovernmental Coordination Group for the Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning and Mitigation System, coordinated by the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, offers an excellent example of cooperation between Member States, United Nations organizations and donors. It has taken decisions on the underlying technologies to be employed and the mechanisms for regional governance, funding, cooperation and communications. At its fifth session, in April 2008, the Coordination Group welcomed offers by India (as at June 2008), Australia (July 2008) and Indonesia (November 2008) to act as regional tsunami watch providers, replacing the interim service provided by the Pacific Tsunami Warning Centre in Hawaii, United States of America, and the Japan Meteorological Agency by 2011.

83. As at May 2007, 11 Indian Ocean countries had submitted national action plans to overcome this gap in developing national capacity. A consortium of seven partners in the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction system offer advisory and implementation support to Governments that have fallen behind in developing national capacity. During 2007, the seven consortium members undertook measures to strengthen the regional and in-country coordination of ongoing and planned partner activities.

84. Under the coordination of the secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, a major achievement has been the establishment of partnership and coordination mechanisms across a wide spectrum of partners and donors, providing a concrete example of the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action. At the national level, countries are working to establish clearer responsibilities to ensure people-centred early warning systems. However, critical elements of community preparedness, community education and outreach programmes are generally not yet in place in most countries. Only a few countries have developed tsunami emergency plans or tested response procedures for tsunamis and earthquakes. Moreover, much of the data needed to develop these plans have yet to be collected. Nevertheless, there is a much greater awareness among all policymakers of the importance of these disaster risk reduction and environmental issues.

E. Looking forward

85. The 2006 and 2007 reports highlighted a number of issues which guided recovery and reconstruction efforts and policies, and subsequently influenced significant progress, achievements and outcomes. In the most severely affected countries, these efforts are now being mainstreamed into long-term development assistance projects and programmes. In this light, it is felt that continued specific reporting to the Economic and Social Council is no longer warranted.

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Letter dated 11 June 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Economic and Social Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith the national report of Belgium for the 2008 annual ministerial review to be held during high-level segment of the 2008 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council (see annex).

I would be grateful if you would circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of the Economic and Social Council, under agenda item 2 (c) of the provisional agenda.

(*Signed*) Jan **Grauls**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

* E/2008/100.

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Annex to the letter dated 11 June 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Economic and Social Council

[Original: French]

National report of Belgium

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Executive Summary

1. Since the Rio Summit in 1992, Belgium has been producing **federal sustainable development plans** which are submitted to the federal Parliament and which give the strategic themes that underpin national sustainable development planning.

2. Belgian development cooperation seeks, as a matter of priority, to promote sustainable human development by focusing on the fight against poverty, based on a partnership approach and adhering to the criteria of relevance to development. It focuses on **five sectors** (health, education, agriculture, basic infrastructure, conflict prevention and strengthening of society) and **four cross-cutting themes** (gender, environment, social economy and rights of children). Currently, it is focused on **18 partner countries** and cooperates structurally with **21 international organizations**.

3. Belgium's activities with regard to the **environment and sustainable development** are structured around six priorities: sustainable management of water resources, control of desertification and forest degradation, protection and sustainable management of biodiversity, improved ecological management of urban and surrounding areas, reduction and prevention of the adverse effects of climate change.

4. The report on Belgian cooperation (2007) to Parliament on Belgium's efforts to **achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDG)** outlines the progress made by partner countries in that regard and the Belgian contribution at the multilateral and bilateral level.

5. Belgium's official development assistance consists of activities at the federal level and at the level of the regions and communities.

6. Belgium contributes actively to the formulation of **joint positions of the European Union** as regards sustainable development and the environment. These contributions are the product of joint efforts by the federal and regional governments, meeting with civil society — represented by the **Federal Council for Sustainable Development** — to promote **multilateral coordination**.

7. Belgium participates in the work of the **Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD)** and fully supports the latter's reform with a view, as a matter of priority, to implementation of the earlier commitments.

8. Belgium is following closely the discussions in New York on ways of strengthening **international environmental governance**. It attaches great importance to the gradual strengthening of UNEP and to enhancing coherence among the environmental conventions and in the operational activities of the United Nations.

9. Belgian cooperation contributes to the financing of the Montreal Protocol and of the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD), the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). It also contributes to the financing of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and thus participates in the assistance given to developing countries for the

establishment of legal instruments and intervention programmes so that they can comply with the **multilateral environmental agreements**.

10. Aside from its contributions to the environmental conventions and to GEF, Belgium contributes to the achievement of Goal 7 of the Millennium Development Goals at the multilateral level, primarily through **UNEP**. Belgium is one of the first donor countries to have embarked on a partnership agreement with UNEP which is trying to improve interactions among the various stakeholders in the programmes, inter alia, local governments, executing agencies, donors and recipient communities.

11. In the **European context**, Belgium is participating in the formulation of development programmes and projects. It is a member of the coordination group of the European Union Water Initiative (EUWI) and of the European Union Energy Initiative (EUEI) advisory group.

12. At the **bilateral level**, conservation of the environment and sustainable development are considered to be cross-cutting themes which must be systematically integrated into Belgium's cooperation activities. As regards Goal 7, bilateral cooperation is focused mainly on the areas of provision of drinking water and basic sanitation.

13. The **Belgian Survival Fund** seeks to increase food security for the poorest population groups. It adopts a multisectoral approach with a view to improving people's situation as regards their current needs without jeopardizing future generations, and thus acts as a precursor programme in respect of sustainable development.

14. On 7 March 2008, Belgium hosted an **international meeting on climate change and development** in Brussels. Those discussions should lead to specific proposals regarding development cooperation policies to deal with the challenge posed by climate change.

15. Belgian cooperation is helping to finance **multilateral activities** implemented by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), UNESCO and FAO as regards **protection and sustainable forest management in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)**. It is also working on setting up a multi-donor trust fund for forest governance in DRC, to be managed by the World Bank. In 2007 and 2008, it participated in various multilateral events on the topic and, in 2007, it organized an international conference on sustainable forest management in the DRC. In the European context, the Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) Action Plan is the European Commission's response to the problem of illegal logging and trade in timber. It is envisaged that Belgium will finance the FLEGT pilot process in the DRC.

16. The aim of the **Tan Hoa, Lo Gom canal** project in Viet Nam, a **bilateral project** executed by Cooperation Technique Belge and the People's Committee of Ho Chi Minh City, was to clean up the canal, renovate neighbouring areas and resettle the population groups whose housing had been expropriated. Participation of the communities concerned, capacity-building and the strengthening of institutions were all essential elements in the execution of the project from the very beginning and they ensured its success, at least for a while. This project has already inspired other donors.

17. As for the **bilateral health and environment programme for the town of Esmeraldas in Ecuador**, it falls within the context of the new decentralized national health policy. The commitment of the municipality and the citizens, promotion of local culture, partnerships between public and private sectors and the support from the international community are continuing to play an essential role in this programme and are proving to be very helpful in promoting the success of the activities.

18. Lastly, the report summarizes the main **difficulties encountered and the good practices** implemented during the projects, and lists various **lessons and recommendations** for the future as regards general guidelines for Belgian development cooperation and at the operational level.

19. The **conclusion** places the activities of Belgian development cooperation in the context of the global challenges that have to be met and in the context of international cooperation.

Introduction

Belgium is pleased to be able to play an active role in the Annual Ministerial Review this year, inter alia, through this annual report. It would like to recall that, in its view, the Council is the ideal forum in which Member States can conduct a political discussion of the economic, social and environmental pillars of development. Belgium continues to strongly support the ongoing reform, which is designed to enhance the Council's legitimacy, credibility and efficiency, and the institution, at the World Summit of 2005, of the Annual Ministerial Review and the biennial Development Cooperation Forum.

1. General context of Belgium's contributions to the achievement of Goal 7

1.1. Sustainable development in Belgium since Rio

Following the Rio Summit of 1992 and implementation, at the international level, of the notion of sustainable development, Belgium has produced four editions of its federal sustainable development plan. Each five-year plan is drawn up by a working group headed by the Federal Planning Bureau, and is then submitted to the Federal Council for Sustainable Development, which consists of representatives of all the federal and regional ministries concerned and representatives of civil society. It is then discussed in the federal Parliament, which confirms the strategic themes underpinning the entire national system for sustainable development planning. After two years, an interim report is issued which evaluates the status of implementation of the latest plan.

1.2. The 1999 Act on development cooperation

According to the Act of 25 May 1999 concerning Belgian development cooperation, the primary goal of such cooperation is sustainable human development, which is to be achieved by fighting poverty based on a partnership approach and adhering to the criteria of relevance to development. It calls for concentrating on five sectors (basic health care; education and training; agriculture and food security; basic infrastructure; conflict prevention and strengthening of society, which also means supporting respect for human dignity, human rights and fundamental freedoms) and four cross-cutting themes (rebalancing the rights and

opportunities of women and men; respect for the environment; social economy). The theme of children's rights was added in 2006. This same concern for concentration and efficiency prompted Belgium to reduce to 18 the number of countries it would partner in bilateral cooperation,[1] and to 21 the number of international organizations it would partner in multilateral cooperation.[2] It is worth noting that the sectors and themes chosen for concentration reflect the concerns of the major international conferences and commitments of the 1990s and are largely consistent with the Millennium Development Goals.

1.3. The Millennium Development Goals

The Millennium Development Goals, which were agreed on following the September 2000 Summit in New York, were to give a new dimension to our development cooperation policy, by placing it within the context of the efforts of the international community as a whole to halve poverty in the world and to ensure a real improvement in the living conditions of millions of poor families by the year 2015.

Belgium welcomed the adoption of those goals at the time and it continues to attach the utmost importance to them. In so doing, it seeks to pay the greatest attention to the four following dimensions, which it believes to be directly linked to the Millennium Development Goals: (i) their global nature, which makes them an indivisible and interdependent whole since no one goal can be tackled in isolation; (ii) their quasi contractual value, which is the basis for a veritable partnership among all actors involved in their implementation; (iii) their particular significance in terms of policy guidance and perspective for actions to be undertaken without, however, leading to a reductionist mechanism; (iv) their value as a preferred instrument for raising awareness and a sense of responsibility among the many actors involved in their implementation, in the North as well as in the South. It is in that spirit that Belgium responded to the Council's invitation to attend the current Annual Ministerial Review, which is devoted to Goal 7.

The Act of 14 June 2005, concerning follow-up to Government activities regarding the Millennium Development Goals, calls for an annual report to Parliament. This report informs the Assembly of the status of the Millennium Development Goal campaign, both overall and for the 18 partner countries. It then describes what Belgium has done via the international organizations and what it has contributed at the bilateral level. The second report was submitted in October 2007. It refers more specifically, as regards Goal 7, to Belgium's participation in the international negotiations dealing with conservation of the environment; its financial contributions to the Global Environment Facility and to UNEP; and its initiatives as regards sustainable forest management in the DRC (see 5.1). In the portfolio of bilateral cooperation projects, the environment appears both as a specific sector and as a cross-cutting theme that must be reflected in each project.

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[1] These countries are: Algeria, Benin, Bolivia, Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ecuador, Mali, Morocco, Mozambique, Niger, Palestine, Peru, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda and Viet Nam.

[2] These organizations are: FAO, CGIAR, GFATM, ICRC, ILO, IMO, OCHA, OHCHR, UNAIDS, UNCDF, UNDP, UNEP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNIFEM, UNRWA, WFP, WHO and the World Bank.

1.4. The strategic note on the environment of 2002

The Act of 1999 calls for the drafting of strategic sectoral and thematic notes to define the strategic policy options and political priorities of Belgian cooperation. The strategic note on the environment, which was issued in 2002, remains topical and identifies six priority aspects of Belgian activities:

- sustainable management of water resources;
- combating desertification and soil degradation;
- protection and sustainable management of forests;
- protection and sustainable management of biological diversity;
- improved ecological management of urban and surrounding areas;
- combating and reducing the effects of climate change.

The first priority aspect corresponds to target 10 of Goal 7, the next three to target 9 and the penultimate one to target 11; the last one is cross-cutting in nature.

1.5. Belgian development cooperation and Goal 7

This report focuses essentially on federal development cooperation activities within the context of Goal 7, namely, to ensure environmental sustainability. Federal cooperation functions via two entities, the Belgian Directorate-General for Development Cooperation, which is responsible for preparing strategies and negotiating programmes with partner countries and organizations, and Coopération Technique Belge (CTB), which is responsible solely for implementing bilateral programmes.

Belgian official development assistance activities include not only activities at the federal level but also activities financed by the regions and communities. The latter account for some 5 per cent of all Belgian official development assistance. The federated entities concerned have their own strategy and geographical and sectoral priorities. It should be noted that, in 2007, the Flemish region devoted 9 per cent of its official development assistance to sustainable development and environmental conservation. As to the Walloon region, since 2000, it has been working on a pilot project to combat desertification in Mauritania.

2. Belgium's participation in the formulation of sustainable development policies

2.1. National consultation and coordination mechanisms

2.1.1. Overall institutional framework: Belgium as a federal Stdte

As noted above (1.5), Belgium is a federal State, consisting of three communities and three regions. Accordingly, the country's administration is in the hands of several bodies — some federal, some federated — and they exercise their functions independently in their respective areas of competence. The federal State, regions and communities are all equal under the law and they therefore operate on an equal footing but in different areas. The rules regarding how these functions are divided are specified in the Constitution and in a series of special laws; there are also mechanisms in place to ensure that the various levels of power function smoothly and in a coordinated manner. This is also true in respect of sustainable development and the environment.

2.1.2. Consultation and coordination mechanisms

The arrangements established to ensure optimum coordination of Belgian sustainable development policy, pursuant to the Act of 5 May 1997, must be viewed in the above-mentioned context. That Act calls for the publication of a federal sustainable development plan[3] every four years and it also calls for a variety of instruments and institutions to be involved in the preparation of that plan, including, inter alia:

- the Interdepartmental Commission for Sustainable Development — consisting of representatives of the federal, regional and community governments and the Bureau of Planning — whose overall mission is to coordinate;
- the Federal Department for Programming "sustainable development", which is responsible for preparing and coordinating the execution of federal policy on sustainable development;
- the Bureau of Planning and its task force on sustainable development;
- the Federal Council for Sustainable Development, an advisory body in which civil society and academic circles are also represented. It can render opinions on sustainable development and development cooperation, either at the request of the federal Government or on its own initiative.

2.2. Consultation and coordination mechanisms at the European and international level

Belgium contributes regularly to the formulation of joint European Union (EU) positions on sustainable development and the environment, which are presented at meetings of the Commission on Sustainable Development, governing councils of the multilateral organizations concerned and at conferences of parties to the multilateral agreements on the environment.

At the European level, its contributions are submitted and upheld within the EU Working Party on International Environmental Issues (WPIEI). The latter formulates, on the basis of contributions from member States, the European positions for UNEP, CSD and discussions on sustainable development in other organs of the United Nations (such as the General Assembly and the Economic Commission for Europe).

The Belgian positions put forward at the European level are always the product of close coordination between the actors concerned. These contributions are the fruit of joint work by all the relevant departments (environment, sustainable development, foreign affairs, development cooperation) of the federal government and of the regional and community governments meeting at the initiative of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs for purposes of multilateral coordination. Civil society, represented by a spokesman from the Federal Council for Sustainable Development also participates in this monthly consultation.

As for international policy on sustainable development, it is again the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs which is responsible for Belgian coordination. Specifically, this involves monthly meetings on sustainable development (COORMULTI). As regards international environmental policy, a separate permanent structure for coordination, the Committee to Coordinate International

[3] In the preparatory phase this plan is subject to broad public consultation.

Environmental Policy was created by a cooperation agreement between the federal Government and the regions.

2.3. Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD)

Belgium participates actively in the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development and fully endorses the mission outlined at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, i.e. to focus more closely on implementing previous commitments by conducting a biennial assessment of progress achieved and remaining challenges. Belgium was also one of the founders of the 10-year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production (Marrakesh Process) in 2003; it has contributed to the Process and has closely monitored its implementation since the beginning.

2.4. International environmental governance

Belgium closely monitors the discussions in New York on the strengthening of international environmental governance. It attaches great importance to the progressive strengthening of UNEP and to enhanced harmonization of environmental conventions and United Nations operational activities. It is no longer appropriate to manage environmental problems through a United Nations programme that depends on voluntary contributions; to split United Nations activities among numerous bodies; or to govern those activities through multiple conventions, with little harmonization.

3. Participation of Belgium in the operationalization of sustainable development policies

3.1. Multilateral dimension

3.1.1. Multilateral environmental agreements — Global Environment Facility (GEF)

Belgian cooperation contributes to the financing of the following four multilateral conventions, to which Belgium is a signatory: the Montreal Protocol, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. It also contributes to the financing of the Global Environment Facility, thereby providing assistance to developing countries for the establishment of legal instruments and intervention programmes that enable them to implement international environmental agreements relating to climate change, conservation of biodiversity, protection of the ozone layer, pollution of international waters, soil degradation — primarily desertification and deforestation — and the elimination of persistent organic pollutants.

In each of these areas, Belgium aims to assist the developing countries in managing situations which are often caused mainly by the developed countries but affect the developing countries the most.

The main obstacle to the effective implementation of multilateral environmental agreements is their complexity and interconnection. It is particularly important to encourage synergies in implementing such agreements in the field. GEF is the ideal mechanism in that respect, as it provides funds for the development of "multifocal" projects that aim to ensure the simultaneous and complementary implementation of several agreements.

Such synergies can also be achieved by systematically integrating the objectives of environmental agreements in national development plans and poverty reduction strategies and their budgets. Belgium participates substantively in this approach through its financing of the joint UNEP and UNDP Poverty and Environment Initiative and its funding of university research on greening poverty reduction strategy papers.

3.1.2. Partnership with UNEP

In addition to GEF and various multilateral environmental agreements, Belgium contributes to the achievement of Goal 7 primarily through UNEP. A 2004 strategy paper between the Directorate-General for Development Cooperation and UNEP, which was updated in 2008, sets forth the main principles of the cooperation between Belgium and UNEP, as follows:

- Affirmation of UNEP's important normative and catalytic role in helping Governments take decisions on environmental issues;
- Support for the strengthening of UNEP's scientific base;
- Support for UNEP's role in coordinating United Nations environmental activities;
- The need to provide technology support and strengthen the capacity of developing countries to implement multilateral environmental agreements (Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building);
- Support for mainstreaming environmental aspects in national development plans and poverty reduction strategies;
- Support for strengthening cooperation with other United Nations agencies, particularly UNDP, UN-Habitat, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Operational cooperation between Belgium and UNEP has evolved significantly over the last five years. In the past, financing was provided on a case-by-case basis, in accordance with UNEP's proposals; there were a large number of small interventions, all of which were funded from annual budgets. Since 2004, programmes have been formulated to cover a restricted number of activities during a four-year period. The 2004-2007 programme included the strengthening of UNEP's scientific base; protection of the environment in coastal areas; and the inclusion of environmental aspects in national development plans and poverty reduction strategies. These activities will be continued in the next four-year programme; however, it will focus more closely on national and local capacity-building.

Since 2005, UNEP has encouraged donor countries to establish partnership agreements in order to ensure more predictable financing; greater coherence with UNEP's programme of work; and improved harmonization among the different actors. Belgium was one of the first donor countries to do so. The purpose is not only to establish a common results-based approach but also to enhance interaction among the different stakeholders: local governments, executing agencies, donors, recipient communities and so forth. The midterm evaluation of the Belgium-UNEP partnership, which was published in 2006, revealed the following:

- Increased efficiency compared to the traditional fragmented project-by-project approach;
- Greater predictability of financial resources as a result of multi-year financing commitments;
- Need to focus on areas in which UNEP has a comparative advantage;
- Risk of high transaction costs for projects involving several components and a large number of countries;
- Need to improve cooperation among the different UNEP divisions working on the implementation of a particular programme;
- Need for multilateral organizations, including the World Bank, to coordinate at the country level on capacity-building;
- Need to achieve the implementation of the UNEP-UNDP memorandum of understanding.

The above-mentioned observations and recommendations led to a number of operational conclusions concerning collaboration between Belgian development cooperation activities and UNEP and revealed the need to:

- Develop a smaller number of programmes addressing a limited number of countries, including bilateral cooperation partners;
- Appoint one division to coordinate programmes being implemented by several divisions, with a view to improving communication and the exchange of information;
- Draw up project documents that include an intervention strategy with indicators, a timetable of activities and a schedule of expenditures;
- Conclude operational memoranda of understanding with implementing partners, particularly UNDP;
- Have Belgium participate in meetings of strategic bodies and follow-up meetings;
- Consult with other donors on monitoring and the harmonization of reporting modalities.

3.2. European dimension

As previously mentioned, Belgium actively participates in the European countries' collective development cooperation efforts[1] and in the elaboration of European Union programmes and aid projects for partner countries, particularly the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP) covered under the Cotonou Agreement. It also participates in regional cooperation activities. Belgium is an active member of the European Union Water Initiative (EUWI) coordinating committee (formerly called the EUWI Steering Group) and of the EUWI Working Group for Africa. One of the main results of the Initiative was the allocation of 500 million euros for the establishment and operation of the ACP-UE Water Facility. The Facility has already made it possible to fund synergies in the field between access to drinking water and basic sanitation services; Belgian development

cooperation has directly enabled the establishment of synergies in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Tanzania and Rwanda.

Belgium is also a member of the advisory group of the EU Energy Initiative (EUEI), which has been allocated 220 million euros by the ACP-EU Energy Facility. This Facility facilitates the financing, within the framework of synergies and partnerships, of access to energy services in rural as well as urban areas, with a view to achieving poverty eradication and sustainable development.

In the run-up to the June European Council and important international conferences in Accra, New York and Doha, the European Commission issued a communication concerning the European Union's role as a global development partner.[4] As indicated in that communication and in the European Council's exchanges and conclusions on the matter, Belgium will participate in the European effort to accelerate and strengthen progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals and Goal 7 in particular, through a comprehensive approach and a multi-stakeholder partnership. In its elaboration of European assistance programmes and projects, Coopération Technique Belge consistently takes into account the fact that, in their different components, the environmental and sustainable development issues reflected in Goal 7 also constitute cross-cutting issues. Each strategy document for the ACP countries therefore includes an environmental profile, within the framework of the tenth European Development Fund for 2008-2013, which came into effect on 1 January 2008.

3.3. Bilateral dimension

With respect to Belgian bilateral cooperation activities, conservation of the environment and sustainable development are also considered cross-cutting issues which must be reflected systematically in the development and implementation of all development assistance interventions.

While multilateral cooperation focuses more closely on projects relating to target 9 of Goal 7, i.e. "Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes; reverse loss of environmental resources", direct and indirect bilateral cooperation focuses primarily on access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation (target 10) and on the improvement of the lives of slum-dwellers (target 11).

This report later presents detailed case studies of two direct bilateral Belgian initiatives relating to targets 10 and 11, in Viet Nam and Ecuador respectively. Water resource management is also one of the priorities of Belgian cooperation in other partner countries, such as Morocco, Algeria and Senegal. Other direct bilateral assistance projects[5] currently being implemented include a dozen programmes and projects aimed at the achievement of target 9; approximately 30 projects for target 10; and another dozen for target 11. Although the projects cover diverse geographical areas, special attention is given to regions in North and sub-Saharan Africa and Central Africa in particular.

[4] http://ec.europa.eu/commission_barroso/michel/Policy/key_documents.

[5] This does not include programmes and projects that have already been implemented or are currently being prepared.

In 2007, 8 per cent of the resources of indirect bilateral cooperation (NGOs and universities) was allocated to activities directly related to the achievement of Goal 7, targets 9, 10 and 11.

3.4. An original sustainable initiative: the Belgian Survival Fund

The Belgian Survival Fund is an original initiative that combines bilateral and multilateral cooperation instruments. The objective of the programme is to improve the food security of the poorest population groups, primarily in sub-Saharan Africa. Between 1999 and 2007, 89 projects were implemented by 24 partner organizations, including multilateral organizations, Belgian NGOs and Coopération Technique Belge.

The Fund was established on 9 February 1999 by an Act which guarantees the Fund the sum of 250 million euros over approximately 10 years. These funds come directly from the National Lottery. A working group of parliamentarians conducts an annual assessment of the progress achieved, evaluations and proposed policy guidelines to improve programme performance.

This pioneering programme takes a holistic and comprehensive multisectoral approach which aims to address the multidimensional causes of poverty and food insecurity. With respect to the environmental aspect of development, the Fund promotes the sustainable management of natural resources through the conservation of water and soil, the rehabilitation of degraded land, small-scale reforestation and so forth. The Fund is an ideal sustainable development programme in that it focuses on human, economic, social, institutional and environmental aspects and strives to meet current needs without compromising future generations.

The overall assessment of the 1999-2007 programmes revealed that linking food security and poverty eradication strategies complicates the various partners' tasks. A sharper distinction should therefore be drawn between the two strategies.

4. International meeting on climate change and development

On 7 March 2008, Belgian development cooperation actors hosted an international meeting on climate change and development cooperation under the chairmanship of Jean-Pascal van Ypersele, who is a professor at the Catholic University of Louvain (Belgium) and Vice-Chairman of Working Group II of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. Her Royal Highness Princess Astrid of Belgium attended the meeting.

The meeting, which was organized by the Ministry of Development Cooperation, served as a forum for a wide range of actors to discuss climate change as a new challenge in development cooperation. Speakers included representatives of Belgian cooperation bodies, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, UNDP, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the World Bank, the European Commission, the Red Cross/Red Crescent Centre on Climate Change and Disaster Preparedness based in The Hague, the WWF and the universities of Gent, Brussels and Louvain-la-Neuve. Participants included a broad spectrum of representatives from civil society, NGOs, the diplomatic corps, parliaments, federal and regional administrations, bilateral and multilateral development agencies, universities, research institutes, the private sector and unions.

Climate change has become a major challenge for development cooperation because it jeopardizes the economic and social development of developing countries and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals by 2015, particularly Goal 1, target 1, i.e. to reduce by half the proportion of people living on less than a dollar a day and Goal 7, i.e. to ensure environmental sustainability.

Moreover, climate change is likely to have a considerable impact on development cooperation projects and their sustainability. According to a recent study conducted by the World Bank, 55 per cent of its projects are climate-sensitive and at least 25 per cent are at high risk of being negatively affected by climate change, yet only 2 per cent are tested for climate sensitivity.

In light of these findings, the meeting was designed to foster a broad exchange of views, ideas and field experience on such topics as:

- Mitigation of climate change: Increasing developing countries' capacity to absorb greenhouse gases (with speeches on topics such as forestry projects in Central Africa) and taking account of associated emissions in projects involving the energy sector or technology transfer;
- Adaptation to climate change: Improving planning by greening the poverty reduction strategy papers;
- Overview of Belgian cooperation activities and initiatives in progress.

The meeting enjoyed the close collaboration of Belgian development cooperation and the Federal Council for Sustainable Development, the authority responsible for advising the Belgian Government on sustainable development policy, and ongoing consultation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Environment and with CTB, the agency in charge of implementing development cooperation programmes.

As part of its broader aim to promote cooperation for sustainable development, the meeting contributed to ongoing discussions on including climate change in Belgium's development cooperation policy, and will be followed up in a report by Professor Jean-Pascal van Ypersele. The report, which is to be completed by the end of June 2008, will contain recommendations for the Ministry for Development Cooperation with a view to better and further integrating climate change and the impact thereof on developing countries in Belgian development cooperation policy and projects.

Pending issuance of the report, it is evident that Belgian cooperation policy should be particularly careful to avoid certain risks and shortcomings identified in other countries, including:

- Perception of climate change as an international topic of negotiation within the province of agencies specializing in environmental issues;
- Lack of awareness that climate change is a major challenge for development in general, and even more so for specific projects (e.g. impact of climate risks on expected outcomes of development projects, vulnerability to climate change of the communities and/or ecosystems associated with such projects, and the impact of development projects on the vulnerability of communities and/or ecosystems to climate change);

- Lack of qualified personnel able to grasp the relationship both between climate analysis and climate policy, and between general development policy and specific development cooperation projects;

- Inadequacy of procedures and tools to evaluate the links between climate change and development projects at various levels (ex ante assessment, follow-up, ex post assessment) and for different project categories (classified according to their climate sensitivity).

On the basis of a specific premise, and taking into account the particular aspects of Belgian development cooperation policy (e.g. characteristics and location of partner countries), and, within the framework of the European Union's initiatives and overall strategy, Belgian development cooperation agencies will have to:

- Devise a coherent strategy for mainstreaming climate change in the various channels of development assistance, including bilateral, multilateral and indirect cooperation and special programmes;

- Examine a series of specific proposals in such areas as personnel training, access to readily usable climate information, stronger ties with the scientific community, and the development of a methodological framework (e.g. entry points, toolbox and checklists).

5. *Case studies: Initiatives in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Viet Nam and Ecuador*

This section provides detailed information about a multilateral programme aimed at contributing to the achievement of target 9 of MDG 7 ("Reverse loss of environmental resources") and two bilateral urban programmes carried out by CTB, and aimed at contributing to the achievement of target 11 of Goal 7 ("Achieve significant improvement in lives of at least 100 million slum-dwellers, by 2020").

5.1. *Belgium's contribution to forest management in the Democratic Republic of the Congo*

Belgian development cooperation activities finance or help to finance several multilateral initiatives for the conservation and sustainable development of forests in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Protecting the integrity of tropical forests is not only necessary for the development of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the entire subregion of the Congo Basin, but an essential priority for preserving biodiversity and reducing global warming. Three programmes have been established to improve forest management. A programme headed by WWF aims to improve forest legislation, help model development planning for forest concessions and support conservation and development in a buffer zone of the Luki Biosphere Reserve in the Congo Basin. FAO provides support for modelling community forestry and UNESCO helps fund the monitoring of protected area management and the training of forestry officials at ERAIFT.[6]

In addition to funding these programmes, Belgium is involved in several multi-donor initiatives.

[6] ERAIFT: *Ecole régionale post-universitaire d'aménagement et de gestion intégrés des forêts et territoires tropicaux* (Regional School on Integrated Management of Tropical Forests and Territories).

In 2006, it actively supported the establishment of a multi-donor trust fund for forest governance in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, to be managed by the World Bank. The objectives of the trust fund, which is a joint initiative by the European Commission, Belgium and France, are to improve forest governance and promote sustainable forestry and, more specifically, to support implementation of the Forestry Code and of the priority reform agenda of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. After considerable delay in establishing the fund, Belgium welcomes the World Bank's announcement that the fund will be operational as of mid-July 2008.

As part of its development cooperation initiatives, Belgium also organized an international conference on sustainable forest management in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in Brussels on 26 and 27 February 2007, with the support of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the international community, specifically, the European Commission, the World Bank, the United Kingdom and France. The conference brought together stakeholders of the Congolese forests with a view to examining the current situation and discussing the sustainable and innovative management of forests and appropriate financing mechanisms to enable forests to become a factor of sustainable human development. The conclusions of the conference were incorporated into the *Declaration of Brussels*.

One major outcome of the conference was the strengthening of the multi-donor trust fund for forest governance in the Democratic Republic of the Congo through additional contributions from the United Kingdom and Luxembourg. A second contribution was made by Belgium with a view to establishing two additional trust funds for protected areas and conservation concessions, respectively. Funding commitments have also been made by Germany and the Netherlands. Furthermore, a Forest Support Unit for the Democratic Republic of the Congo has been established within the Coopération Technique Belge.

On 14 April 2007, a round-table meeting entitled "Towards a New Vision for the Forest of the Congo" was held in Washington, D.C. It was co-hosted by the Governments of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Belgium, and the President of the World Bank.

At the request of the United Kingdom Department for International Development and the World Bank, Belgian development cooperation services were actively involved in organizing a Chatham House event in London, in December 2007, on "Alternative Models and Finance Mechanisms for Sustainable Forest Use in the Democratic Republic of the Congo". The event was expected to result in the development — and funding — of five projects, including the establishment of a Protected Areas Trust Fund for the Democratic Republic of the Congo. A second Chatham House event will be held in Kinshasa on 23 and 24 June 2008.

Finally, during the 2007 European Development Days, held in Lisbon, on the theme "Will Climate Change Development", Belgium took the initiative to organize a side event entitled "Avoided Deforestation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to Combat Climate Change". Belgian development cooperation activities in this area focus on promoting operational partnerships and establishing sustainable financing mechanisms based on compensation for environmental services involving forests in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Also in Europe, the Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) Action Plan is the European Commission's concrete response to the problem of illegal logging and trade in timber. At the invitation of the Commission and at the request of the Government of

the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Belgium will finance the FLEGT pilot process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

5.2. Urban renewal in Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam

Ho Chi Minh City — Ho Chi Minh City is the largest Vietnamese city in terms of surface area, surpassing even Hanoi, the capital of Viet Nam; it is also the country's economic centre. Having undergone rapid development, it, like many other cities in South-East Asia, is faced with significant and poorly controlled rural-urban migration. Officially, some six million people are said to live in Ho Chi Minh City, but that does not include the approximately two million unregistered inhabitants. The urban growth rate of the city is 4.2 per cent annually, with a national average of 3 per cent. Poor management of that growth has led to a widening divide between rich and poor.

The city itself resembles a patchwork, made up of an elaborate network of canals and rivers that, combined, reach a length of nearly 100 kilometres. Although these navigable routes cutting across the urban tissue once represented a practical transport network, they are now mainly used by residents to dispose of garbage and wastewater.

Tan Hoa-Lo Gom Project — The Tan Hoa-Lo Gom canal is one of the most polluted canals in Ho Chi Minh City. The canal basin is home to around 700,000 inhabitants, many of whom live in wretched conditions. Their socio-economic situation is pretty dire for the urban infrastructure, is far from adequate and pollution is horrendous in the area. In light of such conditions, Belgian development cooperation has invested since 1998 in a project for urban renewal and the sanitation of the Tan Hoa-Lo Gom canal. While it has been the subject of some controversy, the project is nonetheless a spectacular success, its main goal having been to improve the living conditions of people residing along the canal and to build the capacity of the authorities and local communities in terms of waste management and the reduction of urban poverty. The project was carried out by the Ho Chi Minh City People's Committee and Coopération Technique Belge; for 10 years, the two partners worked together at a local management unit, PMU415, with a team of some 25 staff. The project cost a total of €20 million, half of which was supplied by the Ho Chi Minh City People's Committee, and the other half by the Coopération Technique Belge. Active involvement, development of socio-economic activities, and capacity-building and strengthening of institutions were key elements in the project's success.

From the beginning, the project adopted a holistic approach. The residents were consulted and the local authorities were actively involved. In the first phase of the project, socio-economic surveys and technical studies were conducted by independent experts. The project was supported by a team of social workers and educators specializing in environmental issues; microcredit groups and special event groups were also established.

Residents presented with new housing options — In order to widen the canal for transport purposes, a significant number of informal dwellings along the canal and on the canal itself had to be demolished. Three different options were given to the inhabitants. Firstly, apartments were built near the canal close to where the families had been living. Small and affordable, the apartments could be expanded by building a mezzanine. There was also a large public space suitable for social or

commercial activities and a market to help ensure that residents maintained a stable income, while stimulating the community life of the neighbourhood.

The second option offered was the assignment of lots to some families, with an underground connection to water and electricity supplies in an area about 10 kilometres away. The residents would be able to apply for construction loans via a construction fund established as part of the project. At the people's request, an elementary school was built instead of the market originally planned by the project.

Finally, following delays in obtaining the necessary authorizations, a third option was made available to other families, who were able to obtain financial compensation to build their new homes.

It was not necessary for all the residents affected by the widening of the canal to move out. The area near the canal was designated for urban renewal, with access to running water and electricity provided for a large number of dwellings. The sewage system and roadways were rehabilitated and a programme was launched for the construction of septic tanks. Albeit informal, the neighbourhood provides a medium-term solution to housing problems. Construction work on the local infrastructure has in fact motivated a number of residents to renovate their own homes.

Waste management — In the past, one out of every three families threw their rubbish directly into the water. Five tonnes of refuse made its way into the canal every day and had to be removed by municipal collection services. The most destitute residents refused to pay the refuse collection fee and left their trash on the street.

The project's management unit has succeeded in improving waste management in four neighbourhoods. To do this, a team of professional social workers was hired to play the role of mediator between refuse collectors, residents and the authorities. Negotiations resulted in the establishment of a cooperative of 30 refuse collectors. The re-organization of refuse collection has improved efficiency and increased profits for collectors, who have signed contracts with 92 per cent of families living in the district. A temporary waste drop-off station, named the *Ba Lai Small Transfer Station*, was built: collectors tip refuse directly into containers and sort the refuse for recycling; refuse is then transported directly to the city landfill.

However, refuse is refuse. An initiative was therefore launched to raise environmental awareness in 17 schools in the district. The goal is to reduce the amount of waste produced and to promote recycling; each year, environmental workshops are held for students.

Wastewater treatment — On 30 March 2006, the project management unit opened the first wastewater treatment plant in Ho Chi Minh City. When operating at full capacity this plant can treat the wastewater of up to 200,000 inhabitants. The plant has two parallel systems, each of which uses oxidation ponds to treat wastewater in a manner that is natural and respectful of the environment. This is the first time this technique is used in Viet Nam. The water leaving the plant generally meets the standards required of surface water and the plant produces no unpleasant smells or sounds. The buffer area surrounding the plant's reservoirs has been laid out as a green space, providing neighbouring residents with quality space.

Secret of success — Participation and capacity-building were, from the start, essential elements in the execution of the more technical components of the project. This cross-cutting approach adopted throughout the project explains why the population and the authorities supported the proposed activities and also explains the sustainable nature of the activities.

A team of social workers met with the inhabitants with a view to finding out what their concerns were. The aim was to create a space conducive to finding appropriate solutions for the inhabitants' needs. It was also necessary to take advantage of the activities in order to improve living conditions in all districts. The team faced an uphill task, for previous experience with participation at the neighbourhood level had cooled the enthusiasm of some residents, prompting them to be somewhat distrustful. The team had to show great understanding and conviction in order to overcome the initial scepticism.

The attitude of the municipal authorities was also vitally important. Improving the living conditions of a group of poor migrants, many of them illegal, threatened to attract more illegal migrants.

Adaption on a larger scale — That project has inspired other donors and the municipality itself. The World Bank's Viet Nam Urban Upgrading Project (with a budget of 400 million euros) was inspired directly by the Belgian bilateral pilot project. Participation by the inhabitants and intervention by teams of social workers in the expropriation process are now commonplace in Ho Chi Minh City. The various possible techniques for housing poor families — division into small lots, apartments, buildings with several floors — are now part of the public debate.

In order to deal with refuse, the municipality is planning to create 25 additional dumps with financing from the Asian Development Bank. Wastewater treatment plants using lagoons are considered an excellent alternative to more traditional or more natural systems. Moreover, the toolbox designed for interactive training in the environment is today being used in all primary schools in Ho Chi Minh City, and the Ministry of Education plans to extend its use throughout the country.

The experience gained by the project is also being put to good use in other cities, including abroad. Members of the Kampala city council recently visited the Ho Chi Minh City project, since Kampala is currently trying to clean up its slums with the support of Belgian bilateral cooperation. The meetings between officials of the two cities resulted in an exchange of knowledge and of good practices. The Ugandans were able to see, on the spot, that consultation and participation were key to the success of such projects.

Outcome — An in-depth final evaluation of the project was carried out in March 2006. The evaluation team concluded that the project would have to be monitored very carefully so as to have a better idea of its impact over the longer term. It is likely that, given the speed at which Ho Chi Minh City is growing, the project will prove even more relevant than it was when it was first designed. Although there are limits, of course, it would seem to be worth looking more closely into such pilot projects in order to make the most of their success.

5.3. Health and environment programme for the town of Esmeraldas in Ecuador

The town of Esmeraldas is the capital of Esmeraldas province in the north-west of Ecuador. If one includes the neighbouring rural areas, Esmeraldas has a population of some 170,000 inhabitants, of whom 100,000 — mostly of Afro-Ecuadorian origin — live in the city.

Esmeraldas was long isolated from the rest of the country, and was accessible only by sea. The road network was developed in the 1970s. Since power was concentrated in Quito — the capital — the town's mandate was limited, provincial institutions were weak and corruption was rampant. Esmeraldas was one of the poorest regions of the country and faced many health and environmental problems associated with poverty.

Ecuador is currently engaged in a process of decentralization and modernization, the aim being to delegate tasks, responsibilities and resources to subnational entities. In that context, the municipality of Esmeraldas has developed a local development plan (2002-2012) and a local Agenda 21, both of which were prepared with the participation of the population. Studies were carried out by UNDP, UN-Habitat and Belgium and subsequently discussed with the people. This led to the preparation of a list of priorities for strengthening local institutions involved in the environment, culture, urban sanitation, treatment of solid wastes, the health system, improvement of public spaces and reforestation of the surrounding areas. The participatory aspect of this municipal planning exercise has now been institutionalized through biannual citizens' assemblies that monitor progress. In June 2007, all the contributors signed an urban pact in order to anchor the process.

The municipality wants to be able to report back to the population and is trying to take the local cultural context into account. The international development partners have been invited to support this planning process. Belgium has decided to support the health and environment sector. Its support focuses on the priorities of the local development plan and is fully consistent with the local structures and policies. The main elements of the programme are:

- Development of local institutional capacity

This component seeks to improve management of health services and hospital waste and to strengthen the municipal departments dealing with hygiene, the environment, local development and planning. Special attention is given to the control of tropical diseases and to HIV/AIDS prevention.

- Strengthening of social participation

This includes popular participation in prevention as regards health and the environment, community investment and organization of hospital wards. Particular attention is given to vulnerable groups.

- Improvement of the urban environment, including removal of solid waste, of wastewater, and water management and infrastructure

The improvements have been impressive. Esmeraldas did not have a sewer system, communicable diseases were a constant threat and HIV/AIDS was spreading rapidly.

The town was regarded as one of the dirtiest and unhealthiest in the region. Today, 60 per cent of the sewage system is in place. Other achievements include

construction of water collection systems, access to drinking water for 80 per cent of the population in urban areas, and collection of solid waste for 85 per cent of the population. Although the poverty rate has gone down and control of communicable diseases has improved, poverty and disease are still major challenges.

One secret of this success is the strong control exerted by the municipality over a programme that the population "took over". Under such circumstances, development assistance can apply international good practices fully and make them part of the ongoing process.

6. *Summary of difficulties encountered, good practices and recommendations for the future*

The first findings and recommendations to come out of the March 2008 meeting on climate change and development are referred to above, under section 4. Below are some comments and recommendations based upon a review of the strategies and priorities of Belgian cooperation as regards sustainable development and management of the environment and its various contributions in the said areas, under bilateral, European and multilateral activities.

6.1. *General trends*

Difficulties encountered:

- Unequal geographical and social distribution of Millennium Development Goal results at the national level
- Difficulties in implementing multilateral environmental agreements due to their complexity and the many links between them

Recommendations:

- Complete reporting on the degree to which Millennium Development Goals have been attained, by specific on-the-spot impact assessments
- Promote synergies between multilateral environmental agreements in the on-the-spot implementation thereof
- Systematic integration of the goals of those agreements in development and poverty-reduction strategies and budgets relating thereto
- Better coherence between these agreements and United Nations operational activities
- Support for strengthening collaboration among United Nations agencies concerned

6.2. *Operational level*

Difficulties encountered:

- Risk of delays in mobilizing funds by multi-donor programmes
- Local authorities' distrust of large-scale projects that are steered from a distance
- Complex bureaucracy in the context of multi-agency activities

Effective practices:

- Comprehensive and cross-cutting approach to development
- Promotion of dialogue and partnership among communities, authorities and executing agencies
- Strengthening of institutions and of the capacities of the administrative services concerned
- Development of socio-economic activities and awareness relating to rehabilitation and sanitation programmes
- Social work to facilitate dialogue among the various development actors and beneficiaries
- Pragmatism in choosing solutions based on the real situation and actual possibilities

Recommendations:

- Need for post-project/programme monitoring in order to assess sustainability and results over the longer term
- Pursuit of a management approach that is increasingly focused on results
- Organization of consultations among donors and other actors/beneficiaries at the level of monitoring and harmonization of reporting modalities
- Creation of conditions tailored to the most vulnerable population groups so that they can help themselves to improve their quality of life

7. *Conclusions and outlook for the future*

The Millennium Development Goals will continue to be the common thread running through all Belgian development cooperation activities. Although it already took steps to that end in 2008, Belgium will have to redouble its efforts in order to attain the goal it has set itself of devoting 0.7 per cent of its GDP to official development assistance by 2010. Belgium also endorses the terms of the Paris Declaration with regard to ownership, harmonization, alignment, results and mutual accountability. It also supports an approach advocating division of labour among the various donors, including within the context of the European Union.

The experience described in the present report amply demonstrates that progress towards sustainable development, the theme of Goal 7, also presupposes a persistent effort based on a clearly stated desire on the part of the authorities concerned and supported by a structured and willing involvement on the part of the population groups concerned. The only way to achieve sustainable development is by working in close synergy with all the partners.

Development cooperation can no longer be considered in isolation. It must increasingly be viewed as part of overall international activities covering a range of areas such as, for example, international security, globalization, management of migration, the growing pressure on resources, particularly water resources and the challenge posed by climate change. In all these areas, Belgium will try to ensure that its development cooperation activities continue to focus, as a matter of priority, on the fight against poverty; the poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSP) prepared

by its partner countries continue to be valuable reference documents in that respect. Indeed, poverty is a major contributing factor to the difficulties and challenges referred to above. It would also be a good idea to extend integration of the "sustainable development" dimension to all activities in order to make sure that the expected progress does not come at the expense of future generations.

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Item 1 of the provisional agenda*
Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters

Requests from non-governmental organizations to be heard by the Economic and Social Council

1. At its 27th meeting, on 5 June 2008, the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations, acting in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31, had before it requests from non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Council to be heard by the Council in connection with the items in the Council's agenda for its substantive session of 2008.

2. The Committee decided to recommend that the following organizations be heard under the agenda items indicated:[1]

High-level segment

Item 2 (c) of the provisional agenda
Annual ministerial review: implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to sustainable development

Sulabh International (Special, 1996)

Conference of Nongovernmental Organizations in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations (CONGO) (General, 2002)

Confédération des bijoutiers, joailliers et orfèvres (Special, 2006)

Convention of Independent Financial Advisors (Special, 2007)

United Nations Association of China (General, 2000)

Foundation for Subjective Experience and Research (Roster, 2003)

Help Handicapped International (Special, 2004)

* E/2008/100.

[1] Current status and the year in which the organization was granted that status appear in parentheses after the organization's name.

08-38200 (E) 200608

Association Tunisienne des Mères (General, 2001)

World Trade Centers Association (Special, 1977)

World Family Organization (General, 1948)

Women's Federation for World Peace International (General, 1997)

Mulchand and Parpati Thadhani Foundation (Roster, 2004)

Ius Primi Viri International Association (Special, 2004)

Mumbai Educational Trust (Special, 2003)

Oasis Open City Foundation (Special, 2003)

Legion of Good Will (General, 1999)

International Union of Economists (General, 1999)

Fondazione per la Ricerca sulla Migrazione e sulla Integrazione delle Tecnologie (Foundation for Research on Technology Migration and Integration) (Special, 2007)

African Action on AIDS (Special, 2003)

Shinji Shumeikai (Special, 2004)

Global Foundation for Democracy and Development (Special, 2004)

All India Shah Behram Baug Society (Special, 2004)

Dianova International (Special, 2007)

International Presentation Association of the Sisters of the Presentation (Special, 2000)

Adventist Development and Relief Agency (General, 1997)

S. M. Sehgal Foundation (India) (Special, 2005)

International Movement ATD Fourth World (General, 1991)

Institute of International Social Development (Special, 2000)

Yachay Wasi (Roster, 2001)

International Network of Street Papers (Roster, 2004)

Brazilian Foundation of America (Special, 2007)

PDHRE (People's Decade of Human Rights Education) (Special, 1998)

Fundación Diagrama Intervación Psicosocial (Special, 2007)

Item 2 (b) of the provisional agenda
Development Cooperation Forum

International NGO Forum on Indonesian Development (INFID) (Special, 2004)

Volontari nel mondo-FOCSIV/CIDSE (Special, 2004)

Inter-Press Service International Association (IPS) (General, 1991)

Fondazione per la Ricerca sulla Migrazione e sulla Integrazione delle Tecnologie (Foundation for Research on Technology Migration and Integration) (Special, 2007)

Action Aid (Special, 1991)

African Women's Development and Communication Network (FEMNET) (Special, 1996)

Eastern African Sub-Regional Support Initiative for the Advancement of Women, The (EASSI) (Special, 2004)

UBUNTU-World Forum of Civil Society Networks (Special, 2006)

CIVICUS (General, 2004)

Centre for Research in Rural and Industrial Development (Special, 2005)

United Cities and Local Governments (General, 1947)

United Nations A/63/85–E/2008/83

General Assembly
Economic and Social Council

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General Assembly
Sixty-third session
Item 57 of the preliminary list*
Operational activities for development

Economic and Social Council
Substantive session of 2008
New York, 30 June-25 July 2008
Items 3 (a) and (b) of the provisional agenda**

Operational activities of the United Nations for international development cooperation: follow-up to policy recommendations of the General Assembly and the Council

Operational activities of the United Nations for international development cooperation: reports of the Executive Boards of the United Nations Development Programme/United Nations Population Fund, United Nations Children's Fund and the World Food Programme

Letter dated 11 June 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Mozambique to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

As you are aware, the Government of the Republic of Mozambique hosted a seminar for the representatives of the eight Governments of the "Delivering as One" pilot countries (Albania, Cape Verde, Mozambique, Pakistan, Rwanda, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay and Viet Nam), together with representatives of the Government of Malawi, in Maputo from 21 to 23 May 2008, to review the lessons learned from the one year of experience of their countries in the implementation of the Delivering as One initiative and to exchange views on how to move the process forward, while advancing the implementation of the recommendations contained in General Assembly resolution 62/208.

I wish to seize this opportunity to thank you most sincerely for the valuable support provided by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, the United Nations Development Group Office, the United

* A/63/50.
** E/2008/100.

08-39453 (E) 010708

Nations Evaluation Group and the United Nations Country Team of Mozambique in organizing and facilitating the event.

The text of the summary statement of the outcomes of the Maputo seminar, setting forth the findings of the one year of experience of the programme pilot countries in Delivering as One and recommendations on the way forward is transmitted herewith for your consideration (see annex).

Among the general findings, the meeting stressed, inter-alia, that the participating countries had become pilots at the specific request of their national Governments in the hope that a more coherent United Nations system would better support the Governments in achieving internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.

The participants further emphasized that national ownership in their development partnership with the United Nations system had been enhanced through the Delivering as One process. They noted the great diversity of their national circumstances and agreed that in their experiences in Delivering as One, the "no one size fits all" principle was also being upheld.

The seminar reaffirmed the gains made by the Delivering as One pilot countries and the other participants with respect to enhancing Government leadership of United Nations system operational activities for development, in line with relevant provisions of General Assembly resolution 62/208.

Initial indications were that the pilot process was yielding positive results in ensuring the presence of a more effective and coherent counterpart of its national partners, and that reports of both the Governments and the United Nations country teams indicated there had been increased availability of the United Nations system's mandates and expertise for meeting the objectives of national plans and priorities.

The lack of predictability and timeliness of funding, the lack of harmonization and simplification of business practices, high transaction costs of the United Nations generally, poor alignment of United Nations capacities with the priorities of programme countries, and a low level of use of national operational capacities were found to be among the major constraints on full implementation and acceleration of the Delivering as One initiative.

The seminar provided a set of specific recommendations for accelerating the implementation of General Assembly resolution 62/208 in areas of national ownership and leadership, alignment of United Nations capacity to the needs of programme countries, coherence of budgetary and funding processes, leadership and coordination of United Nations country teams, joint offices and simplified business practices, among other equally important objectives.

I should be grateful if you could arrange to have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under item 57 of the preliminary list, and of the Economic and Social Council, under agenda items 3 (a) and (b).

(*Signed*) Filipe **Chidumo**
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative

Annex to the letter dated 11 June 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Mozambique to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Summary statement of outcomes and the way forward of the seminar of the programme pilot countries on Delivering as One: exchange of experiences and lessons learned

Maputo, 21-23 May 2008

1. Representatives of the eight Governments of the "Delivering as One" pilot countries (Albania, Cape Verde, Mozambique, Pakistan, Rwanda, the United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay and Viet Nam), together with representatives of the Government of Malawi, met in Maputo from 21 to 23 May 2008 to review the lessons derived from the one year of experience of their countries in Delivering as One and to discuss how to move forward while advancing the implementation of the recommendations contained in General Assembly resolution 62/208.

2. The participants in the seminar express their thanks to the Government of Mozambique for hosting the seminar, Luísa Dias Diogo, Prime Minister of Mozambique, for her inspiring address at the opening of the seminar, the Co-Chairs of the General Assembly Informal Consultations on System-wide Coherence for their active participation, and Anna Tibaijuka, General and Executive Director of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), for her statement on behalf of the Deputy Secretary-General. The participants also express their thanks to the Australian Agency for International Development for its provision of support to this meeting and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, the United Nations Development Group Office, the United Nations Evaluation Group and the United Nations Country Team of Mozambique for their valuable support in organizing and facilitating the event.

Introductory comments

3. The participants stress their commitment to the full and speedy implementation of General Assembly resolution 62/208, adopted without a vote, on the triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system. In that resolution, the Assembly encouraged the Secretary-General to support "programme country pilot" countries in evaluating and exchanging experiences and lessons learned with the support of the United Nations Evaluation Group (para. 139). The participants consider the present seminar to be a response to paragraph 139 of that resolution and a contribution to the proceedings of the operational activities of the United Nations for international development cooperation segment of the substantive session of 2008 of the Economic and Social Council.

4. The purpose of the seminar was to provide an opportunity for Government representatives of the eight pilot programme countries, and other programme countries with similar processes, to learn from each other on successes, constraints and remaining challenges in implementing the Delivering as One experience and how to move forward. It was also intended to assist those countries in sharing their common perspectives with the United Nations system so that lessons learned could

be used to further the implementation of resolution 62/208 towards greater coherence, efficiency and effectiveness of the United Nations system.

5. The participants recognize that, with the exception of Cape Verde and Viet Nam, the reform of the United Nations at country level had started only in 2007. Findings are thus preliminary and pertain to process aspects, as it is too early to evaluate development effectiveness of the Delivering as One initiative. A more complete picture will emerge once an independent evaluation has been conducted in 2009-2010.

6. The participants invite the General Assembly to fully support the countries engaged in Delivering as One in their continuing efforts.

General findings

7. The participants stress that the pilot countries became pilots at the specific request of their national Governments. In making such requests, the expectations of the Governments had been high, including the hope that a more coherent United Nations system would better support the Governments in achieving internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.

8. The experience of the participants was that national ownership in their development partnership with the United Nations system had been enhanced through the Delivering as One process. They noted the great diversity of their national circumstances and agreed that in their experience of Delivering as One, the "no one size fits all" principle was also being upheld.

9. The meeting reaffirmed the gains made by the Delivering as One pilot countries and the other participant countries with respect to enhancing Government leadership of United Nations system operational activities for development. This increased engagement and direction from national Governments are very much in the spirit of General Assembly resolution 62/208.

10. Initial indications are that the pilot process is yielding positive results in ensuring that the United Nations development system is a more effective and coherent counterpart of its national partners. Reports from both the Governments and the United Nations country teams indicate that there has been increased availability of the United Nations system's mandates and expertise for meeting national plans and priorities.

11. Progress has been made in promoting a more unified United Nations system approach to programming and funding its support to countries, through the one programme and one budget. The Governments involved in the Delivering as One initiative clearly recognize and appreciate the progress made but more needs to be done to avoid fragmentation and deliver as one at the country level. Representatives of the pilot and the non-pilot Governments all recognize the need to work even harder towards the success of the initiative.

12. However, major constraints remain on the way towards implementing fully and accelerating the Delivering as One initiative. These include the lack of predictability and timeliness of funding, lack of harmonization and simplification of business practices, high transaction costs of the United Nations generally, and poor alignment

of United Nations capacities with the priorities of programme countries, as well as a low level of use of national operational capacities.

Recommendations

To accelerate the implementation of General Assembly resolution 62/208, the participants at the meeting representing the nine Governments:

National ownership and leadership

13. Underscore that the principle of national ownership and leadership should continue to guide all operational activities for development of the United Nations at the country level.

14. Recognize that the effectiveness of the operational activities of the United Nations is contingent on both a well-coordinated and well-extended United Nations country team with empowered members, and a well-coordinated Government; and that, where necessary, this may require the establishment of new, or further improvement of existing, national coordination structures so as to provide strategic orientation and programme implementation monitoring functions.

15. Also recognize that the United Nations can play an important role in supporting and strengthening the national role and capacity with respect to coordinating actions of the donor community.

16. Recall that the General Assembly encouraged Member States to invite the United Nations to participate, ex officio, in current and new aid modalities and coordination mechanisms, and its invitation to the United Nations development system to enhance its participation in this regard; and invite the Assembly to give encouragement to the countries concerned in their continuing efforts.

17. Stress that the United Nations operational activities should focus on national capacity-building, provision of normative and policy advice, and strategic support for the reduction of poverty, and make use of national implementation capacities in consultation and coordination with the national authorities concerned.

Specifically to ensure the success of the Delivering as One initiative, the participants at the meeting:

18. Call upon United Nations organizations to support Governments of pilot countries and the United Nations country teams in sustaining efforts to mobilize timely and predictable financial support for the Delivering as One initiative, including through common Government/United Nations mechanisms and processes, and new funding mobilization instruments, where necessary and appropriate.

19. Underline that, in those countries in which the One United Nations programme does not cover the whole United Nations Development Assistance Framework, resources should not be shifted to the One United Nations programme to the detriment of the remaining components of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework.

20. Recognize that the establishment of new national coordination structures has been conducive to strengthening Government ownership and leadership and the alignment of the operational activities of the United Nations with national priorities.

It should be ensured that these structures provide strategic orientation and programme implementation monitoring functions to the Delivering as One process at the country level.

Alignment of United Nations capacity to the needs of programme countries

21. Acknowledge the pressing need to strengthen national capacities and recall the need to ensure a coherent and coordinated approach by the United Nations development system in its support for capacity development efforts of programme countries.

22. Reiterate the need for the range and level of skills and expertise assembled by the United Nations system at the country level to be commensurate with the requirements for delivering on the priorities specified in each country's United Nations Development Assistance Framework or One United Nations plan/programme, in line with the national development strategies and plans, including poverty reduction strategy papers, where they exist, and to correspond to the technical backstopping and capacity-building needs and requirements of developing countries.

23. Stress that cost-saving measures and restructuring processes are not ends in themselves but need to be evaluated in the context of the objective of enhanced effectiveness and impact.

24. Call upon the funds, programmes and agencies to accelerate the reform of their headquarters to enable them to respond more effectively and rapidly to the needs of programme countries, and particularly to the pilot countries of the Delivering as One initiative, which are currently undergoing capacity assessments.

Harmonization and integration of planning and programming instruments

25. Call upon the governing bodies of the United Nations funds, programmes and agencies to urgently take necessary decisions to further simplify and fully harmonize the planning, programming and programme approval process.

26. Call upon the Secretary-General, through the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination/United Nations Development Group, to explore a simplified programme approval process for common country programmes and make suggestions to the Economic and Social Council in this regard.

27. Call upon the United Nations Development Group to make use of the pilots to explore and implement further simplification and harmonization of the country programming process, building on the positive experiences achieved with the common operational document.

Coherence of budgetary and funding processes

28. Call upon donors to make multi-year and unearmarked contributions to the One United Nations programme at the country level to allow for resource predictability and therefore improve the timeliness and effectiveness of implementation of programme activities, as well as to endeavour to fully finance the requirements of the One United Nations programme, without causing this to affect bilateral development programmes.

29. Underline that sector-wide approaches (SWAps) should be increasingly adopted as the mechanism for donor funding at the country level as it moves towards the principles of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and complements the process of United Nations reform at the country level.

30. Recommend, as per paragraph 37 of General Assembly resolution 62/208, that the United Nations should develop a strategy and capacity to help strengthen the national fiduciary and budget management capacity of the Government. This can be conducted as part of the development assistance within the United Nations programme.

31. Urge all donors to recognize a common United Nations progress and financial report format as part of the memorandum of understanding that governs the One United Nations fund.

Leadership and coordination of the United Nations country team

32. Recognize the importance of strengthened leadership of the resident coordinator at the head of an empowered United Nations country team, and stress the importance of strengthening the role, and authority and coordination capacity of the resident coordinator through greater delegation of authority by the funds, programmes and agencies.

33. Call upon the United Nations funds, programmes and agencies to consistently support the resident coordinator recruitment and selection process by encouraging the best candidates to apply. The importance of coordination and leadership capacities of resident coordinators and leaders of local United Nations entities needs to be given due consideration during the recruitment and selection processes.

34. Stress that standard basic agreements between Governments and the United Nations should be amended, where relevant, to reinforce and clarify the responsibilities and accountability subsisting between the United Nations country team and the Governments, while maintaining privileges and immunities.

35. Underscore that all United Nations country teams should adopt codes of conduct on the basis of harmonized models developed by the United Nations Development Group Office, and that these should specify, inter alia, the reporting relationships and communication responsibilities.

36. Underline that there should be mutual accountability among country team members. The resident coordinator should not be the only officer to be held accountable. The performance evaluation mechanisms of the agencies should rapidly include assessment of agency heads' contribution to the cohesiveness of the United Nations country team and its capacity to respond to the priorities of the host country.

37. Call upon headquarters of agencies, funds and programmes to consistently support and promote efforts by United Nations country teams to respond to requests of Governments for enhancing coherence, delivery, and communication as one, including, and particularly, through their regional structures. Concrete performance appraisal should be introduced, where it does not yet exist, in order for managers at headquarters to facilitate the reform process at the country level.

38. Stress the importance of the continuity of the United Nations country team and the resident coordinator, as well as the need for involvement of the resident

coordinator in the selection process of senior United Nations country team members. Headquarters need to improve the succession process for United Nations country team members. Extended vacancies and important disruptions, that is to say, too many changes at one time, should be avoided. The changing of heads and resident coordinators too frequently should also be avoided, if possible.

Specifically to ensure the success of the Delivering as One initiative, the participants at the meeting:

39. Stress that the One United Nations programme/plan between the Government and the United Nations country team should recall that the resident coordinator is responsible, with the support of the United Nations country team, for reporting to the Government on the implementation of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (para. 96 of resolution 62/208), notwithstanding the administrative agent's responsibility for reporting on financial issues and, in some cases, on progress, to the donors in respect of the implementation of the One United Nations fund.

Joint offices and harmonized and simplified business practices

40. Call upon the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination to accelerate the process of harmonizing United Nations business practices so as to allow for countries to progress in coherence and effectiveness, while bearing in mind Government-preferred aid modalities.

41. Stress that the United Nations needs to act (quickly) on the issue of human resources, specifically in order to respond to the changes required at the country level owing to United Nations reform (capacity assessments). Staff need to be encouraged so that they are motivated to respond to the needs at the country level.

Specifically, in regard to the pilot countries:

42. Stress that the development of a United Nations premises should be not only viewed as one of the solutions with regard to the harmonization of business practices but also based on cost-effectiveness.

43. Also stress that pilots should be allowed the space to "test" initiatives relating to business practices; otherwise, the planned common services and business practices will remain on a wish list of intentions instead of being translated into actual efficiencies.

Transaction costs, use of savings and increased use of national systems

44. Call upon funds, programmes and agencies to accelerate the implementation of the recommendations contained in paragraphs 37, 39 and 119 of General Assembly resolution 62/208, in which the Assembly requested United Nations agencies to refocus on the increased use of national systems and strengthening capacities, where needed, at country level (finance, procurement, programme delivery, planning and budgeting, monitoring and evaluation), and request the United Nations to undertake assessments of relevant national capacities, identify areas that need strengthening, and set targets for strengthening the required capacities with a view to adopting them.

45. Call upon United Nations agencies, funds and programmes at the headquarters level to allow United Nations country teams, in close coordination with Governments, to identify the best ways and means through which administrative savings can be ploughed back into programme budgets, as mentioned in paragraphs 104 (b) and 114 of General Assembly resolution 62/208, while averting audit objections.

46. Look forward to the work of the Economic and Social Council, through the Development Cooperation Forum, on facilitating the development of clearly defined standards for the provision of development assistance, so as to help promote the adoption and strengthening of national systems by the United Nations.

Specifically, in regard to the pilot countries:

47. Underscore that transaction costs need to be clearly defined and a methodology developed by the United Nations Development Group and Governments on how to measure them. Transaction costs need then to be documented, before, during and after a United Nations reform exercise at the country level. The impact on transaction costs of implementing the recommendations of the capacity assessments needs to be focused on.

48. Call upon the headquarters of funds, programmes and agencies to ensure that missions at the country level are jointly and better coordinated (see paras. 118 and 119 of General Assembly resolution 62/208) and that harmonized outcomes are reported back to the Government.

Communication: coordination with Governments, results and accountability and public awareness

49. Underline also that too many reports have to be prepared by the United Nations country team for various donors and urge donors to recognize a common format for United Nations progress and financial reports.

50. Underscore that, in countries in transition, middle-income countries and other countries in which the United Nations country team needs to rapidly adapt to a changing environment, it is advisable that the Government establish mechanisms that work specifically with the United Nations country team to guide the evolution of the partnership between the Government and the United Nations country team, and continue to enhance the relevance of the United Nations for those countries.

51. Stress that the resident coordinator is responsible, with support from the agencies, for reporting to the Government on the implementation of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (para. 96 of General Assembly resolution 62/208). All new United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks should therefore stipulate this responsibility. Call upon the United Nations Development Group to assist country teams in developing common reporting instruments in this regard.

Monitoring and evaluation (including evaluability)

52. While underlining the responsibility of Governments for evaluation as per General Assembly resolution 62/208, recognize that the United Nations system and the Governments will jointly oversee the conduct of the evaluation of the Delivering as One pilots and determine the value added of the One United Nations programme.

53. Stress that experiences (positive and negative) should be shared across pilots to accelerate learning and adopting of best practices. Learning/experiences from the pilots should also be communicated throughout the membership of the United Nations so as to assist possible self-starter countries.

54. Encourage pilot countries to develop a system for self-evaluation based on agreed indicators/targets.

55. Recognize the gaps in pilot countries' level of preparedness for the independent evaluation scheduled for 2010 and resolve to address these gaps as soon as possible, inter alia, by establishing results-based frameworks using simple methodologies.

56. Stress that monitoring and evaluation systems should rely on Government institutions and data to monitor progress, to the maximum extent possible.

United Nations E/2008/84

Economic and Social Council

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Item 14 (e) of the provisional agenda*
Social and human rights questions: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Letter dated 30 May 2008 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Moldova to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter from Andrei Stratan, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and European Integration of the Republic of Moldova, in which he requests you to refer the application of Moldova for membership in the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to the Economic and Social Council (see annex).

(*Signed*) Alexandru **Cujba**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

* E/2008/100.

08-38843 (E) 260608

Annex to the letter dated 30 May 2008 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Moldova to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to inform you that Moldova is willing to become a member of the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

Since its accession to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees[a] and the 1967 Protocol thereto,[b] Moldova has been actively involved in the complex process of setting up the legislative framework and developing international partnerships in the field of protection and promotion of the rights of refugees.

As Moldova currently represents a destination objective for the asylum-seekers coming from different parts of the world (encompassing about 30 countries), in the last few years the Government of Moldova had carried out a constructive dialogue with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees with the purpose of building sound capacities in managing the issues related to refugees and asylum-seekers and succeeded in developing and adopting new policies aimed at improving application of the international standards in the field.

The membership of Moldova in the Executive Committee would open up the possibility of extensively promoting an integrative approach to this issue at the international level with a view to ensuring adequate management of the influx of refugees at the national, regional and international levels.

We hope that the Economic and Social Council will approve the application of Moldova for membership in the Executive Committee, thus providing our State with the opportunity to effectively contribute to the activities of this relevant body.

(*Signed*) Andrei **Stratan**

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[a] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 189, No. 2545.

[b] Ibid., vol. 606, No. 8791.

United Nations E/2008/85

Economic and Social Council

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New York, 30 June-25 July 2008
Item 2 (c) of the provisional agenda*
High-level segment: annual ministerial review

Letter dated 17 June 2008 from the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Economic and Social Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith the national report of the United Kingdom, entitled "Implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to sustainable development", for the annual ministerial review to be held during the high-level segment of the 2008 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council (see annex).

I would be very grateful if you would circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of the Council, under item 2 (c) of the provisional agenda.

(*Signed*) John **Sawers**
Permanent Representative

* E/2008/100.

08-39045 (E) 240608

Annex to the letter dated 17 June 2008 from the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Economic and Social Council

National voluntary presentation of the United Kingdom

Implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to sustainable development

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1. Background

UK development aid

The UK is leading the way in the fight against poverty. We estimate that the UK's Department for International Development helps to lift 3 million people out of poverty every year.

The UK's development aid will continue to increase over the next three years, and by 2010 will have more than trebled in real terms since 1997. This investment will ensure we deliver the promises made by the UK at the G-8 summit in Gleneagles in 2005, and help countries to accelerate their progress towards meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

How well is the UK working? What are we doing to help the billion people around the globe who live in extreme poverty? *DFID's Annual Report 2008* "Development: Making it Happen" sets out what we did between April 2007 and March 2008 to bring about changes for the better in the developing world.

The report gives a full account of where we spent public money over the last year, and where we have pledged to spend it in coming years, to tackle the challenges that we face.

For example, the UK has:

- Provided improved access to water and sanitation, strengthened nutrition and essential health care to 1.5 million people in Zimbabwe;
- Through our contribution to UNICEF helped provide nutritional support to 80,000 acutely undernourished children;
- Through its support to the Government of India's universal elementary education programme, helped get more than 27 million more children enrolled in school between 2003 and 2006;
- Through its humanitarian assistance in Africa contributed towards the delivery of emergency nutrition, health, shelter, protection and livelihoods recovery programmes reaching approximately 30 million people;
- Through its contribution to the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund helped ensure that 5.4 million Afghan children are now gaining an education, over a third of them girls.

"Development: Making It Happen" is a comprehensive account of an important year for DFID with more attention given to how effectively and transparently aid has been delivered. It is a record of the work that we have done, and a statement of the work that we will do, to keep our promise of ensuring better lives for the world's poor.

The UK and sustainable development

The United Kingdom can claim a long standing commitment to the environment and sustainable development. We have shown leadership on important global environmental concerns from the illegal trade in timber and endangered species, to the recognition of environment as a key dimension of poverty reduction, and most recently in the lead up to the Bali meeting on climate change. Many of the world's leading environmental thinkers and NGOs either come from or are based in

the UK, while British industry and commerce has historically been quick to see the opportunities associated with pollution control, cleaner production, and more recently low carbon growth. The European Carbon Emissions Trading System, the most advanced system of its type, is based in London.

However, the UK also has a large global ecological footprint in terms of emissions and solid waste. The UK is a major consumer using more than 6 times as much energy per person as in many developing countries[1] with per capita CO_2 emissions that are around 100 times the emissions of countries like Bangladesh or Ethiopia. We import 90 per cent of our food, are a major consumer of luxury items from cars to computers, use very large quantities of water, of timber and newsprint and we also generate large amounts of household, construction and industrial waste. In 2004 and 2005 the UK produced about 335 million tonnes of waste.

Therefore irrespective of past successes — from helping to phase out CFCs, to addressing the regional effects of acid rain, introducing the landfill tax, or removing lead from fuel — our share of the responsibility for promoting environmentally sustainable development both at home and abroad remains considerable.

At the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development the UK, among others, made a strong and ultimately successful case for greater integration of the environment with development objectives. The Summit articulated more clearly than ever before that the poor are dependent on the environment for their livelihoods and are particularly vulnerable to environmental change, such as floods, droughts and other natural disasters.

Consequently environmental sustainability was recognized as underpinning other development objectives, a principle already enshrined in Millennium Development Goal 7 but which had not been sufficiently well recognized until that point. However progress against MDG 7 has been mixed (see box below).

Since the Millennium Declaration, global climatic change has emerged as one of the defining issues of our time and brought environment and development issues into much sharper focus. Recent global assessments such as the United Nations Global Environment Outlook (2007) and the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (2005) all point to increasing environmental and natural resource degradation. The most recent assessments of climate change indicate that environmental change is likely to be overwhelming for most poor countries. Already a third of the world's people live in countries which don't have enough water, and by 2025 (on current trends) it will be two thirds.

[1] International Energy Agency. World Energy Outlook, 2000.

→ **Target 9: Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources.** Many developing countries' national plans and policies lack effective measures to address environmental degradation and promote the sustainable use of natural resources. A World Bank assessment of 53 Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers showed limited integration of environmental issues, although there was gradual improvement from 2002-2004.

→ **Target 10: By 2015, halve the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and sanitation.** 1.1 billion people still lack safe and reliable water supplies, while 2.6 billion lack access to basic sanitation.[2] If trends since 1990 continue, the world is likely to miss the sanitation target by almost 600 million people. Indeed, the UN's own assessment concludes that meeting this target "will require extraordinary efforts".

→ **Target 11: Improve the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020.** In 2005, one third of urban dwellers were living in slum conditions. Already, half the world's population live in cities and towns; this figure is expected to swell to 60 per cent by 2030.

2. Reversing environmental resource degradation

If we look at the growth trajectory of most developing economies, they rely on use of natural resources, in particular forests and sub-soil assets. However an important distinction between economies that are successful and those that founder, is whether or not resource wealth is being used as a source of development finance.

Botswana provides an example of a country that has understood this message. An extremely poor and landlocked country, since independence it has transformed its diamond wealth into economic growth through far-sighted government fiscal policy and a commitment to invest in education, health and infrastructure.

Underlying factors contributing to sustainable conversion of natural capital (land, forests, protected areas, sub-soil assets) into long-term economic growth can broadly be grouped into *"market measures"* such as valuation of environmental resources or incentives to shift economic behaviour; and *"governance measures"* such as better regulation of markets and increased transparency in the allocation of property rights.[3]

Market measures remain relatively scarce in developing countries, largely because they tend to be too sophisticated to apply. However there is work that can still be done in demonstrating and building political support for economic valuation environmental resources. In time, with the increasing focus on improving public

[2] UN Global Environment Outlook: GEO-4 (2007).

[3] Political factors also play an important part (such as changes to local power structures associated with decentralization) but are more contextual and less responsive to policy reforms.

financial management, the opportunities to design and apply public policy in this area will improve.

By contrast the opportunities for improving the governance of natural resources are very broad indeed, particularly as governments increasingly move towards democratization and decentralization.

- Regulatory reforms will be fundamental in order to reflect a more equitable distribution of environmental and natural resource rights recognizing, in particular, the needs of the poorest.
- Greater transparency in the way in which natural resources are utilized will be required, in order to address corrupt practices which have become synonymous with environmental degradation. The Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), which the UK has played a leading role in establishing, is one particularly successful example of ways in which to promote governance reform.
- Local communities will need to be supported in taking advantage of these reforms, so that they are able to negotiate a fair deal with governments and investors over access to natural resources.

Scaling up efforts in each of these areas will also increase the resilience of the poor to global climatic change — two billion poor people rely directly on environmental resources for food, household income, shelter, water and sanitation.

3. What are the risks of not making progress on MDG 7?

In international development terms, the risks are clear. Ensuring sustainable management of environmental resources, providing safe water and access to sanitation are prerequisites for achieving the other MDGs, in particular MDG 1 on poverty and hunger, MDG 4 on child mortality and MDG 5 on maternal health. Meeting the hunger target, for example, will require a doubling of the current demand for water from crops alone.[4] Meeting the child mortality targets will require access to safe water, barely on track worldwide and seriously off track in sub-Saharan Africa.

The costs of inaction are likely to be high, both in terms of direct costs and forgone development opportunities. The economic losses due to lack of access to safe water and sanitation is estimated to be $14 billion per year for Africa alone, equivalent to 5 per cent of GDP across the continent. The gradual erosion of the natural resource base, upon which growth is predicated in most poor countries, combined with the degradation of critical ecosystem services (flood protection, soil generation, and nutrient supply), will significantly reduce options for future generations and increase vulnerability to climate change. By 2050, more than 200 million people could be rendered homeless by rising sea levels, floods and drought, while agricultural yields in some countries could be reduced by as much as 50 per cent. Furthermore, necessary humanitarian responses to disasters now cost donors $6 billion per year, or a total of 7 per cent of total ODA flows — a figure which is likely to rise.

[4] Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, Fourth Assessment Report.

4. What is the UK doing now?

The UK is committed to sustainable development through its international aid programme, helping developing countries make improvements by balancing economic, social and environmental factors. Our activities fall under three broad groups: direct contributions to improving environmental management; tackling underlying factors; and facing up to climate change.

UK's main commitments on international sustainable development

- The UK's Third White Paper on International Development (2006) puts sustainable development at the centre of the government's policy priorities and commitments over 2006-2011. It reinforces the UK's central objectives of poverty reduction and achieving the MDGs.
- The UK will follow through on international G-8 commitments, including key actions on climate change, illegal logging and increasing aid to Africa.
- The UK has ratified Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) including climate change, biodiversity, desertification, ozone layer protection, and persistent organic pollutants.
- The Global Environment Facility (GEF) is the financial vehicle for implementing many MEAs. The UK has increased its contribution and is committed to its further replenishment.
- The UK is committed to the UN-Habitat agenda which comprises a wide range of actions for tackling poverty and environmental degradation, including monitoring on MDG 7 Target 11.
- The World Summit on Sustainable Development (2002) laid out commitments in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI). DFID leads in four areas, including environmental integration and access to clean water and sanitation.
- The UK Sustainable Development Strategy (2005) sets out the UK's key commitments on international sustainable development for poverty reduction.

Improving environmental management

The UK works both at country level and through partnerships internationally to support better governance of environmental resources such as water, forests, fisheries, biodiversity and land. We know a lot about what works well and why. For example we know that people are much more likely to invest in environmental management once they have clear and secure rights to land.

In Indonesia through our multi-stakeholder forestry programme, we have been helping local communities, local government and civil society to work together in providing secure access for the poor to already denuded forest land. In Cambodia, where 80 per cent of rural households do not have formal land title, we support the

introduction of land rights which have been shown to increase agricultural productivity by as much as 60 per cent.

In Tanzania the UK worked with UNDP to help the Government to better integrate environmental management in its National Strategy for Growth and Poverty Reduction. Assistance included developing poverty-environment indicators as part of the Strategy's poverty monitoring system and budgeting processes, and work with key stakeholders in developing the strategy. As a result, 14 per cent of targets across key areas of the Strategy relate to environmental management, such as reducing land degradation, water pollution and loss of biodiversity.

Through our support for transboundary initiatives we have helped to improve the governance of critical natural resources which have historically been flash points for regional conflict. The Nile Basin Initiative is a forum for dialogue among the 10 countries that border the Nile. The forum has brought in a wider range of stakeholders and solutions and helped to stimulate economic growth. Similarly, the South Asia Water Initiative promotes dialogue on sharing the benefits of water utilization among seven countries, as well as promoting regional collaboration on research.

Tackling underlying factors

Getting more from trade

One of the most fundamental ways in which the UK can effect change to support environmentally sustainable development is through reforms to international trade policy. Most goods traded with developing countries are natural resource derived, providing opportunities to promote the sustainable use of those resources while also ensuring a fair deal for the poor. The UK has established a cross-government Trade Policy Unit to increase coherence in aid and trade policies and to help to place a greater priority on developing country needs.

Our support for the EU Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade initiative is a good example of how trade can promote sustainable production in poor countries. Voluntary Partnership Agreements between the EU and producer countries promote trade in legal timber. At the same time the EU assists better forest governance in those countries. Current negotiations between the EU and Indonesia, Malaysia, Cameroon and Ghana aim for agreement by the end of 2008.

The UK is leading efforts to tackle illegal fishing including supporting the fishing industry, the Marine Stewardship Council and the Fair-trade Foundation to promote certification for fisheries products. This will help to ensure that future fish supplies into the European Union are sourced legally and sustainably.

Trade also holds the potential to promote environmentally sustainable development by accelerating the development and increased use of low carbon goods, services and technologies. For example, the WTO Committee on Trade and Environment associated with the Doha Development Agenda is looking at ways to reduce tariff and non-tariff barriers for a range of low carbon products, such as wind turbine parts and photovoltaic cells. Removing tariff and other barriers encourages diffusion of sustainable technologies, the skills needed to use them and further innovation.

Valuing environmental resources

Sustained economic growth is the single most powerful means of lifting people out of poverty, and in most poor countries it is largely built on naturally derived wealth. Where possible we look for opportunities to encourage our developing country partners to assess the value of environment resources and to understand the opportunities presented by improved environmental management.

The DFID/World Bank supported economic assessment of the contribution of natural resources to Ghana's growth has led to a long-standing engagement with the Ministry of Finance on the costs of environmental degradation. Natural resources were found to generate 25 per cent of government revenues. This initiative led to constructive engagement with the Ministry of Finance on the costs of environmental degradation — calculated to be 10 per cent of GDP per year — and on the importance of using natural resources sustainably for improved long-term growth prospects.

The UK also provided financial and technical support for small-scale cocoa farmers in Ghana, and in 1999 stepped in to guarantee a £400,000 loan to set up a company to market the fairly traded cocoa. Importantly, DFID's loan guarantee contained an innovative provision, enabling the farmers to own 33 per cent of shares in the holding company, giving them a stake in how their chocolate was produced and sold as well as a share of the profits.

Building capacity

Better valuation of natural assets opens up opportunities to build capacity and strengthen national systems for environmental management. These systems remain largely under-funded in national budgets and DFID is making the case for more environmental funding through the budget process. The shift towards aligning donor support behind developing country priorities presents specific opportunities to do this. We have recently been working with the Irish Government to develop and apply guidance so that budget support programmes can better address the need to build capacity for environmental management.

Internationally, the UK has continued to make good progress through our Sustainable Development Dialogues with Brazil, China, India, Mexico and South Africa. These bilateral partnerships, agreed at Ministerial level, and supported by a fund of around £11 million over the four years from 2007-08, are designed to deliver our commitments under the World Summit on Sustainable Development. Last year we signed off strategic workplans with China and Mexico and are developing workplans with the other dialogue countries. These workplans guide specific activities under the dialogues and many exciting activities have been launched last year.

For example, we are working with Yunnan province, China, to share best practice in industrial resource efficiency and waste management, taking the experience of the UK's National Industrial Symbiosis Programme (NISP) and similar work with Mexico where NISP's approach has already been incorporated into the draft national waste strategy. We are also undertaking a series of projects in India to develop sustainable forestry practices for community forests that produce economic, environmental and social benefits.

Research

We are investing up to $2 billion on development research over the next five years, to help to address global challenges likely to affect poor countries and poor people the most — such as climate change, population movements, and rising oil and food prices. This will include research into valuation of natural resources as well as looking at how political processes, policy reform and institutional issues affect natural resources management.

The DFID-supported Ecosystem Services for Poverty Alleviation (ESPA) research programme will tackle complex problems associated with the sustainable management of ecosystems, for poverty reduction. The work builds on the findings of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment. It will help developing countries to formulate and manage successful research projects, and develop better tools to assess ecosystem services and their impacts on human well-being.

Facing up to climate change

The effects of climate change that will occur over the next generation are now inevitable. However there is a lot that can and must be done to help developing countries to adapt and to protect the most vulnerable. The UK's work in three related areas will make this happen by: helping countries to understand the risks of climate change and how to adapt; helping them to integrate this knowledge into development plans; and by providing finance to meet the additional costs of building climate resilience.

Climate change impacts

By 2080, an extra 600 million people worldwide could be affected by malnutrition. An extra 400 million people could be exposed to malaria. And an extra 1.8 billion people could be living without enough water.

By 2050, 200 million people could be rendered homeless by rising sea levels, floods and drought.

Glaciers in the Himalayas are likely to disappear by 2035, affecting the water supply of three quarters of a billion people in Asia.

In 2007 the UK established the $1.5 billion Environment Transformation Fund (ETF) as a vehicle for scaling up funding to tackle climate change and associated environmental management challenges. Focal areas will include: financing clean technology for climate change; promoting investments for sustainable forest management; and piloting the integration of climate resilience into country level development plans and budgets.

We are considerably increasing our support for research into adaptation, linked to a Climate Change Network to ensure that developing countries have access to this knowledge. We have completed climate risk assessments in four countries (India, Bangladesh, Kenya and China) and we are supporting specific actions to help the poor respond in vulnerable areas such as Bangladesh's low lying and exposed coastal sand and mudflats, known as "the Chars".

5. Raising our game to meet current and future challenges

We need now to scale up action in a number of proven and strategic areas that are most likely to deliver a development benefit, and help to achieve MDG 7 outcomes.

Integrate a strong development perspective into the challenges of global climatic change. More than any current environmental issue, climate change has the potential to refocus international attention on MDG 7. Related outcomes which are now key priorities for the UK include:

- Reframing the climate change debate so that development is considered central to agreeing a fair post 2012 global deal and, in order to facilitate this, building a coalition to help developing countries work out and negotiate their objectives;
- Helping developing countries now to move onto low carbon and climate resilient growth pathways, by supporting the proposed Strategic Climate Fund.

Help developing countries to better understand the economics of natural resources management and how to build sustainable growth strategies. For natural resource dependent countries in particular, this means:

- Significantly increasing the amount of quality information available to policymakers on how natural resources and environmental services support economic growth;
- Providing specific and practical policy advice on measures necessary to sustain economic growth in the medium to long term;
- Strengthening both the amount and quality of the dialogue between Ministries of Finance and Environment/Natural Resource Ministries.

Continue to strengthen environmental governance through support for better policies and institutional capacity at country level — for example we need to:

- Make sure that countries can make the best use of already scarce water by having single national water resource plans to meet basic needs, support agricultural and industrial growth, prepare for increasing climate variability, and ensure equitable allocations to avoid conflicts internally and with neighbouring States;
- Ensure access to land and other critical natural resources for the poorest and provide the additional support that they need to build sustainable livelihoods;
- Continue to support and draw from successful global initiatives such as the Sustainable Development Dialogues and the UNDP/UNEP Poverty Environment Initiative.[5]

Provide more direct support for "what works well" in addressing specific MDG 7 targets, particularly in relation to the provision of safe water and sanitation, for example:

- The UK is providing a $75 million sanitation, hygiene and water supply programme for Bangladesh jointly implemented by the Government and UNICEF, as well as a similar programme in Ethiopia.

[5] The PEI provides financial and technical support to ensure that national planning and budget processes are aligned to MDG7 outcomes.

Harness the transforming potential of trade in promoting environmentally sustainable development, for example by:

- Using current debate over high food prices to make progress on agricultural trade reform to provide incentives for developing countries to invest in land reform and increasing agricultural productivity;
- Increasing aid for trade to help developing countries to benefit from new opportunities such as the transfer of low carbon environmental technology and related services;
- Developing sustainability standards and global norms for particular products and the use of these standards by the WTO as a reference point.[6]

6. Aid effectiveness in support of the Millennium Development Goals

Meeting the Millennium Development Goals and addressing the challenges created by climate change requires concerted action by all countries, rich and poor, developed and developing. Developing countries must take the lead in setting the policies and strategies that will help them to develop, to fight poverty, and to reduce their risk to natural disasters. But rich countries also have a crucial role to play, in providing enough aid of the right quality, and focusing on the results achieved.

2008 is a key year for international development. The Accra High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, the MDG Call to Action, and the United Nations Financing for Development meeting will provide key opportunities to reach agreement in the crucial areas that will make a difference for poor people.

The UK Government wants to see the 2008 meetings generate progress in:

- **More aid** — enhancing our efforts to ensure that the 2005 EU and G-8 aid targets are met
- **Better aid** — making aid work harder for poor people by respecting country leadership
- **Focus on results** — greater political momentum towards meeting the MDGs

More aid is vital if we are to promote long-term development and address the challenges caused by climate change. Aid is needed to help meet the Millennium Development Goals and address the immediate needs of the poorest. This is doubly important given the expected increase in natural disasters caused by climate change.

Better aid means making sure that each dollar of aid generates the maximum impact on poor people's lives. This means ensuring that aid does not only generate short-term results today, but helps to build up effective and accountable States that are able to fight poverty over the longer term. It means providing aid in ways which help to build up State capacities, so that States can set the policies and provide the services that are vital for poor people. It means helping to ensure that States are more accountable to their own citizens for the use of both their own and donor resources. Over the very long term, it means helping poor countries to be more self-reliant and no longer in need of aid.

[6] The office of Climate Change's global technology project is currently looking at the role of international standards in promoting low carbon technologies.

Focusing on results means that Governments must meet their ODA commitments to achieve the MDGs. But government funding and policy change alone will not be enough. The MDG Call to Action initiative is concerned with widening the effort to achieve the MDGs to include private sector, faith groups, civil society and NGOs and setting out what needs to be done now. Halfway to 2015 we have made some vital progress but we still face an enormous challenge. Without an extraordinary effort we will fail to achieve the MDGs. If we work more closely and with a broader range of players with greater cooperation then we can achieve the goals we have set ourselves. The Call to Action seeks to do this.

7. What is the UK doing for greater aid effectiveness?

Meeting our commitments on aid volumes

The UK is one of the world's largest bilateral donors. Our official development assistance (ODA) has trebled since 1997, from £2.1 billion to £6.85 billion a year by 2006. The UK is firmly committed to further increasing aid to reach the 0.7 per cent target by 2013, two years ahead of the joint European Union aid volume target agreed in 2005. We are firmly on track to meet this target. UK aid will exceed £9 billion, or 0.5 per cent of our gross national income, by 2010, an increase of more than £4 billion over the next three years.

Implementing the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness

The UK strongly supports the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness as an important milestone in improving the impact of aid on poor people. The 2006 monitoring survey on the implementation of the Paris Declaration identified that the UK is on track to meet all the Paris Declaration targets and that we perform above the donor average in all areas. But in order to ensure that our performance remains strong, we are ensuring that the Paris Declaration principles are fully incorporated into our policies, procedures and strategies.

We have taken steps to improve aid effectiveness in line with all five of the Paris Principles:

Country ownership is the foundation of the Paris Declaration. Without ownership, aid will not achieve lasting poverty reduction. We are supporting country ownership by agreeing ten-year Development Partnership Arrangements (DPAs) with partner countries. Over the past two years, we have made such agreements with Yemen, Zambia, Pakistan and Uganda.

The UK's position on conditionality also supports country ownership. Our position is that conditionality should not be used to impose specific policy choices on recipients. We have also successfully influenced the World Bank to issue new Good Practice Principles on conditionality.

As well as working directly with governments, we support greater country ownership and accountability between States and their citizens by strengthening parliaments and supporting civil society organizations. In Nigeria we have a £2.65 million programme to strengthen the capacity of the National Assembly. In Afghanistan, we are helping the non-government organization Womankind Worldwide to empower women and help them to influence policy.

The second pillar of the Paris Declaration is **alignment**. Alignment means donors basing their overall support on partner countries' national development strategies, institutions and procedures. Alignment is important because aid will be more effective in immediately reducing poverty and in building up effective and accountable States if it works *with* government policies and systems, rather than bypassing them.

In Rwanda, for example, the majority of aid to the health sector is spent via NGOs, local government or separate donor projects, rather than through Central Government. As a result, some of the most prevalent diseases receive only a small share of aid. The government has a strategy to scale up health services, based on evidence of what would work for the poor, but does not have enough central financing to implement its strategy.

Our experience is that in the right circumstances, the best way to strengthen government systems is by using them. We use three "partnership commitments" to determine whether we should use our aid to support partner government policies and strategies:

- Commitment to poverty reduction;
- Respect for human rights; and
- Commitment to strengthening public financial management, good governance and fighting corruption.

In countries where the partner government meets these commitments, we align with government priorities and use country systems to manage our money, for example by providing budget support or other programme-based approaches.

The UK is aligning behind country priorities by providing poverty reduction budget support, both general and sector-based, in countries where we assess that the partner government meets the three partnership commitments. In 2006/07, we provided budget support to 14 countries, constituting 18 per cent of our total bilateral programme. We also support sector-wide approaches, which align donor support behind government-led strategies in particular sectors. In Malawi, we are supporting an Essential Health Package to reduce illness and premature deaths among poor people. The number of women giving birth in certain hospitals in Malawi increased by 200 per cent in 2006.

The third pillar of the Paris Declaration is **harmonization**. Harmonization means donors better coordinating their actions and adopting simple and transparent common procedures. Harmonization is important because uncoordinated aid can divert government staff and Ministers away from essential functions and into managing individual donor projects and agendas. In 2005, DAC estimates showed that 34 countries received 10,453 donor missions, one per country each working day. The average number of donors that each partner country has to deal with has grown from about 12 in the 1960s to more than 30 in 2001-2005.

The UK is working with other donors to harmonize aid in a number of ways:

- Working with partners and other donors to agree **Joint Assistance Strategies**, for example in Ghana and Tanzania.
- Developing **joint donor offices**, for example in Sudan and Cambodia.
- Agreeing **delegated cooperation or "silent partnership" agreements with other donors**. This enables us to channel our funds through other donors and reduces the administrative burden on partner countries. In Yemen, for example, the UK

recently agreed to contribute £3.5 million to the Netherlands government over five years to fund health programmes.

- Working with partner countries and other donors to agree a better **division of labour** among donors. In Zambia, for example, the Ministry of Finance has estimated that the government-led division of labour exercise, in which we participated, reduced transaction costs by at least 50 per cent.

- In countries where systems are weak and we have fiduciary concerns about providing budget support, we channel aid through **multi-donor trust funds**, which incorporate the principles of programme-based approaches. Examples include the World Bank managed Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF).

The fourth element within the Paris Declaration is **managing for development results**. To further improve our results focus, we have published a Results Action Plan. This outlines priority actions to ensure that we and our partners use evidence effectively to improve development outcomes.

In DFID we have established an Independent Advisory Committee on Development Impact (IACDI) to help evaluate the impact of UK aid. We are also working with other donors to build up the evidence of what works and what doesn't by developing joint approaches to the evaluation of impact through the OECD-DAC's Evaluation Network, the network of networks on impact evaluation (NONIE), and the development of the new International Initiative on Impact Evaluation (3IE).

We are working with other donors to enhance our understanding of the effectiveness of the various multilateral donors, and have compiled Multilateral Development Effectiveness Summaries for our key multilateral partners, published in December 2007. These summaries distil information about how well individual multilateral organizations manage their resources, contribute to results on the ground, are building for the future and working with others.

We also work with other donors through the Multilateral Organisations Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN) Group to build a common understanding and evidence base of the effectiveness of the various multilateral donors, and to carry out monitoring of multilateral effectiveness. The evidence will be used to feed into ongoing reform processes and to inform resourcing decisions. MOPAN has also encouraged multilaterals to look at ways to improve their own self-reporting.

The fifth and final principle of the Paris Declaration is that donors and partner countries are **mutually accountable** for development results. Donors and partners commit themselves to hold mutual assessments of progress in implementing agreed commitments in aid effectiveness. Effective mechanisms for donors and partner countries to hold each other accountable for their behaviour and its impact on development results can create incentives for change in donor and partner behaviour. They can also increase the opportunities for Parliaments and civil society to put pressure on donors and governments to deliver results.

The Paris Declaration target only commits donors and partners to developing country level mutual accountability mechanisms. The UK believes that better mechanisms for donors and partners to hold each other accountable are also needed at the international level. We are supporting work through the DAC to assess current mechanisms at both country and international levels, to explore gaps and consider how

these can be addressed. We would like to see progress in addressing these issues at the Accra High Level Forum in September 2008.

Pushing for faster and deeper global progress on aid effectiveness

As well as ensuring that we fully implement the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, the UK is also working to promote further reforms to the international aid system.

We are playing a key role in preparations for the 3rd **High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness (HLF3)** to be held in September in Accra, Ghana. We are pressing for partner countries to play a strong leadership role at the HLF. We are working with partner countries, other donors and civil society organizations to promote agreement on an ambitious Accra Agenda for Action.

The UK would like Accra to secure agreement in particular on:

- Improving the predictability of aid
- Strengthening the governance of aid
- Reducing the proliferation of aid
- Strengthening incentives for donors to use and strengthen country systems
- Faster progress on the untying of aid

Moving beyond Accra, the UK also wants to work with partners to create the international momentum needed to reform our international institutions, to make them more representative and better able to effectively address today's global challenge. Priorities include improving the international community's support for countries emerging from conflict. The UK Government, led by our Prime Minister, is committed to this.

8. Focusing on results: the MDG Call to Action

Our Prime Minister had the honour, in July 2007, to launch the MDG Call to Action alongside the United Nations Secretary-General, to encourage the international community to accelerate progress to reach the MDGs. For the UK the Call to Action means harnessing the efforts not just of governments but of the private sector, civil society, NGOs and faith groups to deliver the Millennium Development Goals. It means galvanising action which is more effective and uses resources more efficiently. Since the Call to Action was launched, 42 heads of governmen' from four continents have signed the Declaration. And following a Business Call to Action event hosted by UNDP and the UK in May 2008, we now have 79 private sector leaders who have signed their support and committed themselves to core business initiatives to accelerate progress on the MDGs.

When the United Nations Secretary-General and the President of the General Assembly convene a high-level meeting on the MDGs in New York on 25 September, they will bring together world leaders with representatives from the private and non-governmental sectors, cities, faith and professional groups to take stock of progress so far, showcase successes the world could build on. set a path for the future to 2015, and allow each group to make practical commitments on the contribution they would make. Ensuring Environmental Sustainability will underpin all our successes and our challenges on the path to 2015.